THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TACTICS EMPLOYED BY SENIOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS WHEN ENGAGED IN CONFLICT

by

ROBERT DOUGLAS LOEWEN

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR Robert D. Loewen

TITLE OF THESIS Tactics Employed by Senior Educational Administrators When Engaged in Conflict

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED Ph.D.

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED 1983

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(Signed) R. D. Loewen

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 277
Herbert, Saskatchewan
Canada S0H 2A0

Dated October 12 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Tactics Employed by Senior Educational Administrators When Engaged in Conflict submitted by Robert D. Loewen in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

...David S. Thiessen.....
Supervisor

.....

.....

.....

.....
External Examiner

Date ...October 12, 1983...

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine tactics employed by senior educational administrators to achieve closure of an educational conflict in which they were involved. Five sub-problems were posed regarding the nature of the conflict episodes, the frequency of the tactics employed, the relationships between the tactics and the kinds of conflict, the usefulness of the tactics, and the usefulness of the research technique employed in this study.

In order to address the major problem and the sub-problems, Flanagan's Critical Incident Research technique was used to collect the information deemed essential for the study. The data were analyzed by content analysis. The data for the investigation were obtained through twenty-four interviews conducted with Saskatchewan Directors and Superintendents of Education in a four month period beginning in November of 1980 and ending in February of 1981.

The data were examined in a number of ways. The most productive analysis resulted from examining the responses when grouped by conflict parties. Those groups were teachers, boards, principals and other groups. It was found that when the conflict was between senior administrators and teachers the respondents tended toward

using the tactic of imposition of rules and regulations. In such cases the incident had a short time span and the issue was most often a question of the teacher's competence and frequently ended in the termination of contract. When in conflict with boards, the administrators tended to use the tactics of forming coalitions and stalling for time. In those episodes the time span was relatively long. The issue most frequently was one where the administrator and his board disagreed in principle on educational philosophy. When the senior administrators were in conflict with school principals the tactics most often used by them were information control and imposition of rules and regulations. The factor of time and the issue were not concerns which could be generalized in these instances. Finally, when dealing with other groups, the respondents used information control as a tactic. However, because there were only two such cases, time and issue were not consequential.

Six of the tactics (information control, coalition formation, rules and regulations, information channels, denigration, and stall for time) accounted for 81 percent of all the tactics used by the respondents. The remaining six tactics (information distortion, coalition destruction, environment control, withdrawal, reward control, and naivete) made up the balance.

The research technique proved to be useful and

powerful. Some extremely sensitive data were collected and some information gained which would not have been possible through the use of a different procedure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge the invaluable and direct guidance provided by my supervisor, Dr. David Friesen. Without his firm and scholarly advice this work would not have appeared in its final form. The contribution of Dr. D. Richards, who was a part of this endeavour from the outset, is sincerely appreciated. The participation of Dr. K. Ward and K. A. Neufeld is acknowledged. The writer appreciates the suggestions of external examiner Dr. Peter Murphy. The advice of Dr. R. Bryce was helpful.

A debt of gratitude is owed the Saskatchewan Superintendents and Directors of Education who took part in the data collection for this thesis and who treated me with warmth and candour.

Finally, I deeply appreciate the contribution of Lois, my wife and typist, Her encouragement ultimately led to the completion of the study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	xiv
List of Figures	xv
Chapter	
1. THE PROBLEM	1
INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
A RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	3
IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY	4
Contribution to Research	4
Practical Significance	5
Delimitations and Limitations	6
DEFINITION OF TERMS	6
Conflict	6
Tactic	7
Administrator	7
Board of Education	7
District Board (of Trustees)	7
ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS	8
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	9
AN OVERVIEW	9
Causes of Conflict	10
Types of Conflict	12
Dysfunctions of Conflict	15

Chapter Page

Functions of Conflict 18
Conflict Management 19
A Model 22
LITERATURE REGARDING TACTICS 25
Information Control 25
Information Distortion 26
Information Channels 26
Rules and Regulations 27
Control of Rewards 28
Denigration 28
Others 28
Coalition Formation 29
Withdrawal 29
Appearing to Lose 30
SUMMARY 30
3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE 31
RESEARCH DESIGN 31
DATA SOURCE 33
METHODOLOGY 34
Reliability 35
Validity 36
Analysis of Data 37
SUMMARY 39
4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA 40
Respondent #1 42

Chapter Page

Respondent #2 44
Respondent #3 46
Respondent #4 47
Respondent #5 49
Respondent #6 51
Respondent #7 53
Respondent #8 54
Respondent #9 56
Respondent #10 58
Respondent #11 59
Respondent #12 61
Respondent #13 63
Respondent #14 63
Respondent #15 64
Respondent #16 66
Respondent #17 67
Respondent #18 68
Respondent #19 70
Respondent #20 71
Respondent #21 73
Respondent #22 74
Respondent #23 76
Respondent #24 77
Summary of Respondents 78
INFORMATION CONTROL 78

Chapter Page

Information Overkill 80
Withholding Information 80
Explanation Information 81
INFORMATION DISTORTION 83
INFORMATION CHANNELS 84
RULES AND REGULATIONS 85
REWARD CONTROL 87
DENIGRATION 88
COALITION FORMATION 89
Coalition Building 90
Coalition Destruction 91
WITHDRAWAL 92
APPEAR TO LOSE 94
EXPRESSED NAIVETE 94
ENVIRONMENT CONTROL 95
STALL FOR TIME 96
SUB-PROBLEMS 98
Sub-problem 1: Nature of the Conflict Episodes 98
Sub-problem 2: Tactics and Frequency . . . 101
Sub-problem 3: Tactics Typical of Kind of Conflict 103
Sub-problem 4: Usefulness of Tactics . . . 105
Ancillary Sub-problem: Usefulness of the Research Technique 106
Time as a Factor 107

Chapter Page

SUMMARY 109

5. CONFLICT LITERATURE vs STUDY DATA 111

Causes of Conflict 111

Types of Conflict 114

Dysfunctions of Conflict 116

Functions of Conflict 117

Conflict Management 122

The Pondy Model 123

SUMMARY 125

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS 126

The Major Problem 126

Nature of Conflicts and Kinds of Tactics 128

Tactics and Frequency 130

Tactics and Conflict Management 132

Important Tactics 133

Tactics and Time 133

Usefulness 135

7. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUMMARY 137

CONCLUSIONS 137

The Major Problem 137

Sub-problem 1 and 3: The Nature of the Conflicts and Particular Tactics 139

Sub-problem 2: Frequency of Tactics . . . 140

Sub-problem 4: Usefulness of Tactics . . . 141

Chapter Page

The Critical Incident Technique 141

IMPLICATIONS 142

SUMMARY 143

BIBLIOGRAPHY 144

APPENDICES

A. TRANSCRIPTS 150

b. CORRESPONDENCE 172

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
4.1	Frequency of Tactics	79
4.2	Conflicts by Parties Involved and by Issue . . .	99
4.3	Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Tactics Employed by Administrators	102
4.4	Tactics Employed by Administrator and Other Participant.	104
5.1	Types of Conflict and Frequency	115
5.2	Administrator's Perception of Functional-Dysfunctional Aspects of Conflict Categorized by Party Involved in the Conflict	120
5.3	Functional-Dysfunctional Aspects of Episodes by Parties Involved	121

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Likerts' Linking Pin Concept	21
2.2	Pondy's Model of Conflict	23
4.1	Duration of Episode by Respondent	108

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

Conflict has been a concern of social scientists for many years. As early as 1902, Simmel discussed conflict, its sources and possible alternatives for its resolution. Argyris (1957:77) said that a ". . . formal organization creates in a healthy individual feelings of failure and frustration, short time perspective and conflict." Conflict will occur in all organizations.

Contemporary social scientists have documented conflict between organizations and between groups and individuals within organizations as a fact of organizational life. Perrow (1972:158), Hall (1977:229), Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:463), and Owens (1981:277) have all noted the pervasiveness of organizational conflict.

Van Doorn (1966:111) underscored the importance of conflict to social science theory when he said:

> Social tensions and conflict have been a major preoccupation of sociologists since social science first came into being. One can say without exaggeration that various lines of social thought were determined at the outset by a struggle for power in social reality.

Further, the resolution or management of conflict

has been an area of much research in the last several decades. Blake and Mouton (1961), Blake, Shepard and Mouton (1964) and Likert and Likert (1976) have published major works related to the topic.

Handy (1976:232-235) dealt briefly with tactics and strategies employed by people involved in organizational conflict. However, an intensive search of the literature revealed little other discussion regarding the subject of tactics and strategies related to the management or resolution of conflict. The thrust of this study was to examine the tactics used by educational administrators in conflicts in which they became involved.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The major problem addressed in this study was to identify and examine tactics employed by senior educational administrators in dealing with organizational conflicts in which they were involved. The major problem was addressed through the examination of the following four sub-problems.

1. What is the nature of the conflict episodes described by the senior administrators in an educational setting?

2. Are some tactics used by the administrators and which tactics are used more frequently than others?

3. Are any particular tactics used by the administrators typical of a particular kind of conflict?

4. Are specific tactics employed by the

administrators more useful to administrators than other tactics in dealing with conflict?

Further, an ancillary sub-problem emerged from the research technique. It was thought that the critical incident approach would uncover meaningful data which might not be available if a different approach were used. Flanagan's critical incident research technique (1954:327-358) was chosen as the vehicle for data collection for the thesis. Previously, the procedure was seldom used in educational administration research. Therefore, an attempt was made to determine the usefulness of the technique for research in educational administration.

A RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

As noted above, there is an abundance of information on the phenomenon of conflict itself, but a dearth of literature dealing specifically with tactics participants use when engaged in an organizational conflict. Although much has been written regarding tactics and strategies used by antagonists in a setting which is by definition adversarial, such as collective negotiations and courtroom proceedings, conflicts which arise from day-to-day living and working in an educational organization have heretofore not been extensively examined insofar as tactics are concerned.

As well, conflicts within and between organizations have often been explored from the perspective of

understanding the dynamics involved, but the researcher was unable to find any references in scholarly work which dealt with the more enigmatic and subtle aspects of the phenomenon. For example, the question of whether people react intuitively when engaged in conflict has not, to the writer's knowledge, been fully addressed. In other words, the various aspects of conflict (such as functions, dysfunctions, kinds, resolution) have often been explored; however, other, more subtle components of a conflict in an educational organization have not been explored. Therefore, this study has focused on a unique aspect of the phenomenon of conflict; i.e., the tactics which educational administrators use in attempts to hasten closure of a conflict episode.

Finally, the winning or the losing of the conflict or the functional and dysfunctional aspects of the episode were of minor concern in this investigation. Although such considerations are important to a conflict, they were not included as basic components of this study. Therefore, they were subjected to little scrutiny.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Contribution to Research

First, as stated above, little has been documented regarding the tactics employed by parties in a conflict in an educational setting. The study examined some ways in which participants conduct themselves when dealing with the

conflict.

Second, March (1974:21) said,

> Educational administration programs that have only recently embraced conflict management as the fundamental fact of administration will discover the conflict muted by ennui and institutionalized into bureaucratic procedures.

However, Main and Roark (1975:754-759), Bethel and others (1978:22-27), Frey and Young (1978:18-21), Likert and Likert (1976:1-5) and many others contended that conflict will be more evident in educational organizations in the future. This study was designed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding organizational conflict generally and to the knowledge of conflict in educational administration specifically.

Practical Significance

There are three major practical dimensions of this study. They are:

1. the tactics identified in this study will allow practising administrators to broaden their conflict resolution skills. That is, a list of specific tactics may allow administrators to be cognizant of such tactics, and they may then choose one in preference to another;

2. if some tactics can be said to be more useful than others, it would be possible for administrators to choose one tactic in preference to another in future conflicts; and

3. the implications for in-service conflict

resolution workshops are self-evident. Administrators in the field could be taught the tactics which are most useful.

Delimitations and Limitations

The study was delimited to Saskatchewan Superintendents and Directors of Education. Other individuals within the hierarchy of the various school divisions were not considered and, therefore, the tactics described in the thesis are those as seen through the perspective of those holding similar positions.

Furthermore, the one perspective approach to collecting the data is acknowledged as a limitation. If the other party's anecdote had been obtained, other information would probably have been forthcoming.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Conflict

Thomas (1976:890) noted that ". . . there is no consensus among researchers on a specific definition of 'conflict'." However, he stated that a working definition of the notion is necessary and offered (p. 891) ". . . that conflict is the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his." For the purposes of this study, that rather generic definition given by Thomas was used because each respondent was asked to give an account

of what he believed to be a conflict within his educational organization.

Tactic

The term "tactic" was used to portray a procedure employed by the administrator to hasten closure of the conflict which he discussed with the researcher.

Administrator

In this document the term administrator was used to mean a Saskatchewan Superintendent of Education or Director of Education. A Superintendent of Education is employed by the Saskatchewan Department of Education. In the 1980-81 school year there were 11 such people. A Director of Education is employed by the Board of Education which he serves. In the 1980-81 school year there were 76 such people.

Board of Education

A board of education in Saskatchewan is composed of duly elected people, living in a school division, which constitutes the fiscally autonomous decision-making authority for the school division.

District Board (of Trustees)

A district board of trustees in Saskatchewan is composed of duly elected people, living in a school attendance area, which fulfills an advisory role regarding the school (s) in the attendance area. The term is used

synonymously with "local board." In urban jurisdictions, local advisory committees take the place of district boards.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter 2 of the thesis contains a brief survey of general conflict literature and more specific literature related to the problem and sub-problems.

Chapter 3 is a description of the technique used for gathering the data and the methodological approach employed for the analysis and investigation of the information. The data, as they relate to the problem and sub-problems, are presented in Chapter 4.

Some relationships between the conflict literature reviewed and the data for this study are explored in Chapter 5. A discussion of findings and how they relate to the main problem and the sub-problems is found in Chapter 6. The final chapter contains a series of conclusions and implications as well as a summary of the study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The major thrust of this investigation was to identify and examine tactics used by administrators when engaged in an organizational conflict. An overview of the literature on the phenomenon of conflict within, between and among organizations is presented in this chapter. As well, a list of tactics employed in such conflict is developed from the research and discussion of conflict situations in organizations.

AN OVERVIEW

Thomas (1976:889) noted succinctly that:

> Conflict, like power, is one of those fascinating but frequently abused and misunderstood subjects. Like any potent force, conflict generates ambivalence by virtue of its ability to do great injury or, if harnessed, great good.

However, Boulding (1977:26) said that, although conflict is pervasive in society, the greatest amount of human endeavour is not conflictual. He stated:

> Conflict processes are so spectacular and visible that we are apt to overestimate their importance. I would be extremely surprised if more than 10% of human activity goes into conflict. The other 90% goes into essentially nonconflictual activities consisting of production, consumption, sociability, communication, travel, eating and sleeping, teaching and learning, sex, and so on.

Therefore, conflict can be viewed as an integral facet of human behaviour, but it does not exert a constant force in shaping the majority of human activity. Conflict is exceptional human behaviour and, when examined, must be understood as such and should not be exaggerated simply because of its visibility. However, the consequences of conflict are such that they are major contributors to the study of organizations and organizational behaviour.

Causes of Conflict

Roethlisberger (1959:127) when addressing conflict in organizations stated:

> Management is out of touch with the sentiments of the worker and frequently has to act in ignorance of these sentiments; consequently, management practices often collide with the sentiments of the employees . . . .

For him, a lack of understanding between management and worker was the cause of disagreements between the two groups.

Ruben (1978:202) claimed that communication, or the lack of it, was at the root of conflict. He stated:

> Probably the most pervasive view of the relationship (between communication and conflict) is that conflict is, in fact, the direct result of faulty communication--a misunderstanding or a disagreement.

Most conflicts, according to this view, could ultimately be attributed to problems in communication.

Assael (1969:573) indicated that conflict was an outgrowth of "functional interdependence and the scarcity of resources." When groups within an organization depend upon each other for goal attainment or productivity, the result

will be conflict. Also, scarce resources in an organization cause conflict between competitors for those resources.

Pondy (1969:500), when summarizing Walton's work, concluded that conflicts in an organization could be attributed to jurisdictional boundary ambiguity, a perceived increase in departmental friction, departmental dependence or physical obstacles to communication.

Corwin, when studying staff conflicts in 28 public schools identified five variables which could lead to conflict. They were:

1. structural differentiation--where conflict was associated with the degree of organizational differentiation, staff specialization and the number of levels of authority;

2. participation in the authority structure--where conflict was a result of decentralization of decision-making;

3. regulating procedures--where conflict was related to the degree of organizational control;

4. heterogeneity and stability--where heterogeneity of the staff, additions to the staff and the past experience of the staff were all related to conflict; and

5. interpersonal structure--where the rate of informal interaction among a staff was related to the amount of tension and conflict.

In essence, Corwin found causal relationships between conflict and organizational structure, participation, regulating procedures, heterogeneity and stability and the

interpersonal structure.

In sum, these authors indicated that conflict will occur at those places in an organization where people meet and must deal with issues related to boundaries of control, interdependence, resource competition and differences in approaches to problem solving.

Types of Conflict

Barnard (1938:261-264) indicated that man's conduct in society is dictated by a set of private moral codes. The codes are derived from the social environment (political, religious, economic), the physical environment (biological properties, phylogenetic history), technological practices or habit, education and training. They are gained by absorption from the environment or negatively by the lack of concrete experience. He said that some of the codes were superior to others. However, when ". . . codes have substantially equal validity or power in the subject affected, conflict of codes is a serious personal issue." (p. 264). Therefore, for Barnard the type of conflict an individual experienced was a direct result of the specific codes of behaviour which were pulling the individual in different directions.

However, Argyris (1957:39) claimed that:

> Conflict, generally speaking, refers to the event which occurs when a person is not able to act in a specific situation. All conflict involves opposite needs being in action (tension) at the same time.

According to Argyris, four types of conflicts arise. He

describes them as follows:

1. when a person desires to do two things which he likes equally well but it is possible to do only one;

2. when a person has the choice of doing only two things neither of which he likes;

3. when a person has the choice of doing something he likes, but runs the risk of punishment; and

4. when a person has the alternative choices of doing something he likes but runs the risk of punishment.

For Argyris, conflict was merely a matter of choices and/or the risk of some form of punishment.

More recently, Likert and Likert (1976:8) adopted the Guetzkow and Gyr categorization of organizational conflict. The first was substantive conflict or "'conflict rooted in the substance of the task.'" Conflicts which were, for whatever reason, a manifestation of job related frustrations they termed substantive. However, affective conflict was "'conflict deriving from the emotional affective aspects of the . . . interpersonal relations.'" Personality conflicts, or emotionally sparked conflicts, were called affective.

Coser (1956:49) also identified two types of conflict. Realistic conflict was seen as being only one of several means to an end. "Conflicts which arise from frustration . . . directed at the presumed frustrating object . . ." he called realistic. Whether the conflict emanated from task or personality, if it was the result of

frustration it was labelled realistic conflict. On the other hand, nonrealistic conflict was an end in itself. It was motivated ". . . by the need for tension release of at least one of the participants . . . ." This type of conflict was often a result of the simple lust to fight. Bernard (1965:454) supported the notion; "Some people love to pit their wits against worthy opponents."

Pondy (1967:297) identified three conceptual models of conflict ". . . to deal with the major classes of conflict . . . ." They were:

1. the bargaining model--to deal with the interest groups, both inside and outside the organization, which compete for scarce resources;

2. the bureaucratic model--to deal with disagreements along the vertical dimension of the hierarchy; and

3. the systems model--to deal with disagreements along the lateral dimension of the organization.

Thus three types of conflict were visualized by Pondy, two of which would occur within the organization and one which would occur between the organization (or its members) and a different organization (or its members).

Beck and Betz (1975:59-74) examined organizational conflict in schools and named two types of conflict. First, intra-stratum conflict was defined as being conflict between groups or individuals of equal (or approximately equal) power. Second, inter-stratum conflict was conflict between

groups or individuals of unequal power. That is, conflicts within the schools were typed on the basis of the power bases within the organization of the conflicting parties.

In sum, it would seem that, with the exception of Coser's lust for the fight idea, conflict has been grouped into two generic typologies: those which occur within the organization between organization members, and those which occur between competing organizations.

Dysfunctions of Conflict

Parsons (1954:54) stated that conflict in an organization was disruptive, dissociating and dysfunctional and that organizational conflict was an indicator of organizational sickness. There was no room in a healthy system for conflict. Coser (1956:23-25) also indicated that Roethlisberger, Mayo and Warner viewed conflict in an organization as inherently bad and as a force ". . . destroying stability and endangering the structure of American society . . . ."

Barnard (1938:4) said that organizations could be described rather than defined. The most important characteristic for him was that they were associations of cooperative efforts which were conscious, deliberate and purposeful. He thought that actions of individuals were dictated by overriding codes of behaviour. Barnard (1938:271-272) posited that if the codes were disrupted or in conflict that at least one of the following consequences

would result:

> . . . either general moral deterioration, beginning in frustration and indecisiveness; or diminution of the general sense of responsibility, manifest in the tendency to let decisions hinge on chance, external and irrelevant determinants, incidental pressures; or a deliberate withdrawal to a less active condition, thereby reducing the occasions of conflict; or the development of an ability to avoid conflicts, known as "keeping out of trouble". . .; or the development of the ability to construct alternative measures that satisfy immediate desires or requirements without violating any codes.

In sum, it would seem that Barnard saw little if any positive aspects to conflict.

Therefore, for these early sociologists, conflict was seen as a disease which, if left unchecked, would destroy an organization. Conflict was condemned as being dysfunctional in an organization.

Pace and Boren (1973:325), more contemporary authors, wrote "Ultimately, conflict will seriously endanger--even destroy--group process and any possibility of success." For them, too, organizational conflict served little useful purpose.

However, noteworthy social scientists of the sixties believed that conflict was not entirely dysfunctional in an organization. In fact, they tended to agree that conflict is dysfunctional only when objectives are disrupted. Assael (1969:573) said ". . . conflict is destructive when a lack of recognition of mutual objectives results . . . ." Pondy (1967:310) agreed when he stated that conflict is ". . . negative and very costly if subunit goals and actions

are blocked . . . ." It would seem that organizational goal displacement is the prime dysfunction of organizational conflict.

Although displacement of goals by the combatants in a conflict situation is the single most important dysfunction of organizational conflict, other destructive effects are noteworthy.

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:463) identified three ". . . negative consequences of excessive conflict . . . ." They were (a) duplication of effort, (b) withholding of information or giving information, and (c) poor coordination. All three conditions, they said, are ". . . detrimental to the overall health of the organization . . . ."

Blake, Shepard and Mouton (1964:34-39), when discussing union-management disagreements, claimed that unchecked conflict can lead to total break-down in the organization. If conflict were allowed to run its own course, ". . . agreement was possible only through force . . . ." (p. 39). In that situation, (e.g., a strike) all productivity would cease, and all energies to both sides would be directed toward winning the conflict.

Blake and Mouton (1961:93-94) outlined a somewhat different dysfunction of organizational conflict situations. They suggested that after an intergroup competition, where one side has emerged victorious, both groups have a dysfunctional impact on the organization. They stated that

the winning side becomes "fat and happy," avoiding work and seeking play. The losing group becomes "sullen and splintered," avoiding work and fighting amongst themselves. In either case, productivity is reduced.

Functions of Conflict

Although, according to Van Doorn (1966:111), the "Founding fathers of American sociology did not regard conflict as a constructive force" some positive attributes are apparent. Argyris (1957:39) saw conflict as having both positive and negative characteristics when he stated ". . . conflict can be used to build the personality as well as to distort or even destroy it."

Further, Ruben (1978:206), when discussing communication and conflict, succinctly said that:

> Conflict is not only essential to the growth, change and evolution of systems, but it is, as well, a system's primary defense against stagnation, detachment, entropy and eventual extinction.

Conflict, for Ruben then, was seen as a vital force in an organization. The words growth, evolution and extinction suggest a living, growing organism. Ruben reified organizations and viewed conflict as an integral factor in a dynamic process.

Conflict, according to Corwin (1969:509), encourages more control. Implicit in his argument is the increase in managerial interest in subordinates.

Assael (1969:573) indicated that:

. . . interorganizational conflict is beneficial when

> a more equitable allocation of the balance of power and economic resources results by the formation of new countervailing forces and greater balance and stability within the system.

If power and resources in the organization are more equally distributed, then the conflict has fulfilled a beneficial function.

Pondy (1967:298) claimed that conflict is ". . . a key variable in the feedback loop of an organization . . . ." A conflict situation should provide an administrator with an indication of trouble within his organization. Administrative attention should be directed to conflict areas with a view to improving those areas.

Pondy (1967:310) also stated that conflict could prove valuable to a manager if he wished to create one or more of the following:

1. a confusing situation within his organization to cover unstated objectives;

2. a diversion among his subordinates so that he might be called in to mediate the dispute he instigated; or

3. a conflict situation with an out-group to maintain or increase the cohesiveness of his in-group.

According to Pondy, then, conflict can be a tool to be used by a skillful administrator.

Conflict Management

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:429-430) stated that the two prime functions of a leader are diagnosis and execution. In both functions organizational goals and tasks

must be kept in mind by the leader when planning how best to use his resources. Because excessive organizational conflict tends to mute goals of the organization, it behooves an administrator to develop some skill in the management of conflict which inevitably will arise in his organization.

Recent literature on conflict has indicated that the situation where one party wins and the other party loses must be avoided. Frey and Young (1978:18-21), Main and Roark (1975:754-759) and Bethel and others (1978:22-27) said that face-to-face confrontation, accompanied by a significant third party, is an acceptable approach to resolving conflict. Talking out the problem to reach a mutually acceptable solution is the basis behind the method.

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:464-466) outlined three major approaches to the resolution of conflict. They were:

1. process consultation--an expert consultant is called in to referee meetings of the opponents;

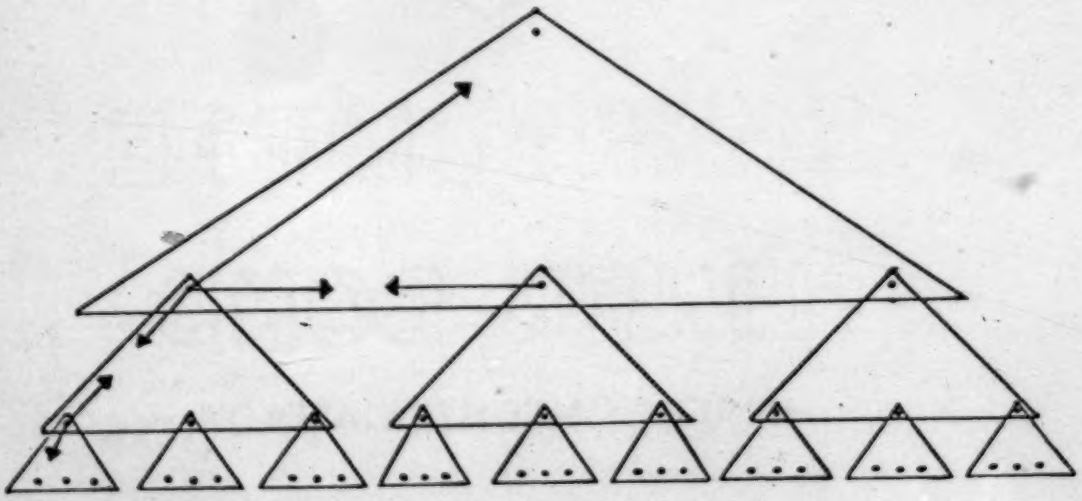
2. laboratory exercises--a series of exercises is given to both parties so that they can learn how they are misperceiving the other group; and

3. structural changes--a reorganization of the structure in order to minimize areas of conflict and maximize areas of agreement.

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:466-467) outlined the Blake and Mouton (1964, 1969) approach to conflict

resolution. The "grid organizational development" program of Blake and Mouton attempts to change the organizational climate and managerial techniques of the entire system. A systematic reorganization of goals, beginning at the top managerial level, leads to establishment of goals and objectives and are more compatible with all levels of the organization.

Likert and Likert (1976) stated that individuals who are common to two or more groups within an organization are the key to conflict resolution. They called these people linking pins (see Figure 2.1).



(The arrows indicate the linking pin function.)

Figure 2.1 Likerts' Linking Pin Concept

Likert and Likert (1976:191) described a linking pin as a person who:

> . . . plays an essential role in coordinating problem solving between the two or more groups of which that

> person is a member and enables the different groups to reach compatible solutions to the problems dealt with.

These linking pins, according to Likert and Likert, could be placed in either the lateral or vertical structure of the organizational hierarchy.

A Model

Pondy (1967:296-320) provided a model (Figure 2.2) for understanding the dynamics of conflict. He indicated that there were five stages in the development of a conflict. They were latent conflict, perceived conflict, felt conflict, manifest conflict and conflict aftermath.

Each conflict in an organization is a result of an outcome, or aftermath, of a previous conflict. The result of the previous conflict was unsatisfactory to at least one of the conflict actors. That gives rise to a series of events which at some later date results in another conflict which are dealt with below.

Latent conflict develops because of competition for scarce resources (e.g., high school departments looking to increase their budgets), drives for individual autonomy (e.g., decentralization of decision making in a school), or divergence of individual and organizational goals (e.g., disagreement between administration and staff of a school over curriculum changes). Latent conflict is present in some form or another in every organization to some degree.

Perceived conflict exists when individuals develop

an extraordinary sensitivity about an aspect of latent conflict. For example, a high school department head has to compete every year for budget considerations, but in a year of restraint he probably becomes aware of, or perceives, a potential conflict when budget time comes.

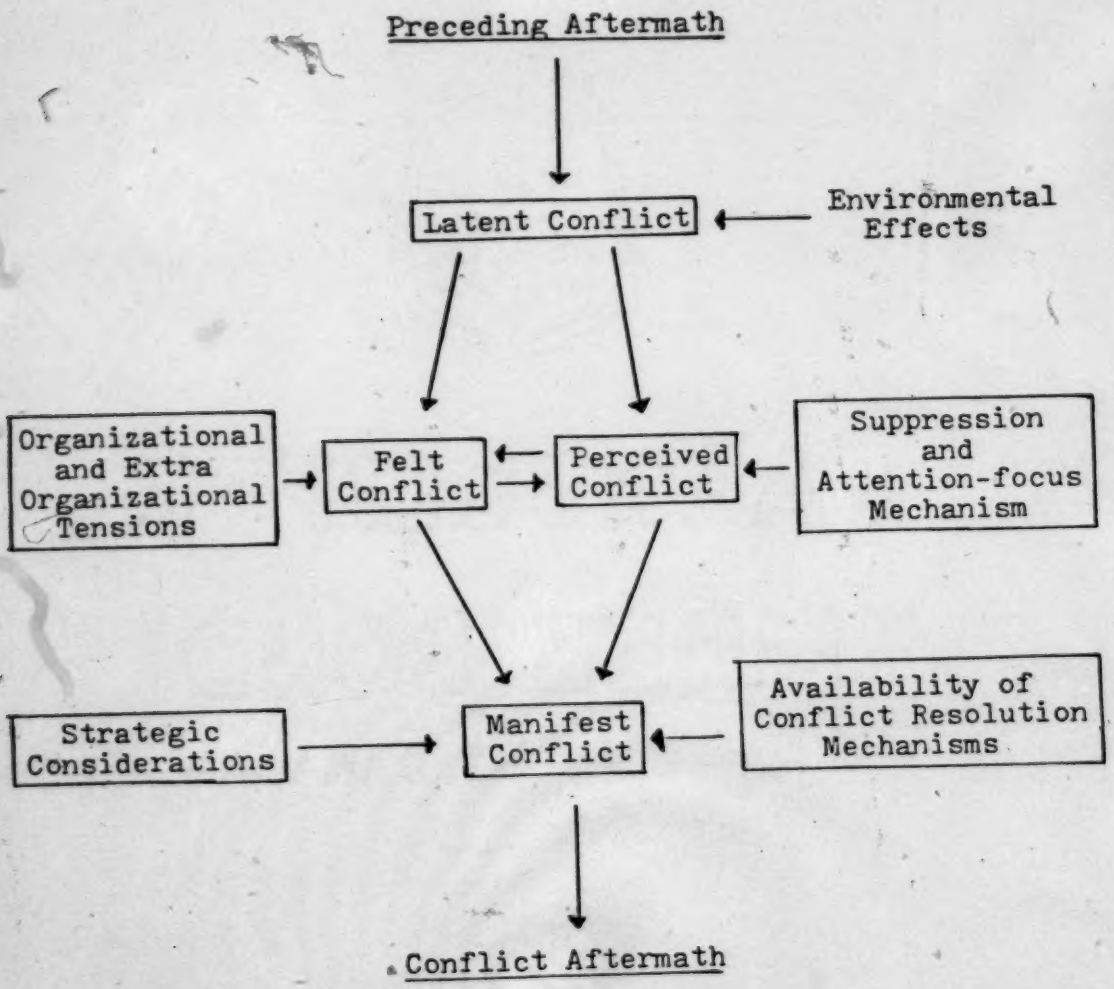


Figure 2.2 Pondy's Model of Conflict

Felt conflict is when perceived conflict becomes personalized. If the department head sees that the budget

problem will become a reality, and that he will be involved, he feels the impending conflict. However, at this stage he may not feel particularly tense or anxious about the issue.

Manifest conflict is characterized by aggressive behaviour on the part of the actors. It is ". . . that behaviour which in the mind of the actor, frustrates the goals of at least some of the other participants." (p. 304). For the department head, it may well be the budget meetings where the manifest conflict takes place.

Finally, Pondy said each conflict has an aftermath. If the conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of all participants, the individuals will (a) retire happy, or (b) focus on latent conflicts not previously seen or dealt with. On the other hand, if the conflict is suppressed, but not resolved, other latent conflicts will be aggravated and an explosion will result.

For Pondy, the interfaces between perceived and manifest conflict, and felt and manifest conflict are the points where conflict resolution skills must be brought into play. He also said that:

> . . . a conflict episode can be thought of as a gradual escalation to a state of disorder. . . . This does not mean that every conflict episode necessarily passes through every stage to open aggression. (p. 299)

That is, although the process is gradual and is likely to end in aggression if left unchecked, the culmination in aggression need not be inevitable.

In sum, the model suggests that conflicts originate

with other conflicts, they are dynamic, the process is gradual, conflicts end in aggression if left unchecked. Outside factors (such as environment and strategic considerations) can affect conflicts at various stages of the episodes.

LITERATURE REGARDING TACTICS

The balance of this chapter is devoted to reviewing literature from which a list of tactics was derived.

Handy (1976:232-235) suggested six tactics "used by conflicting parties" to achieve closure of the episode. They are listed and discussed below.

Information Control

The control of information is related directly to the notion that information is power. Refusal to distribute "confidential" or "restricted" information, highly technical (not understandable) information and hoarding of information are all examples of controlling information.

Implicit in the notion is that one of the antagonists realizes he is controlling information. He purposefully, either overtly or covertly, controls the information in any of a number of ways. The combatant may overload his opponent with information, restrict the information, or merely present information in a manner which is beneficial to him. In any event, information control has as a basic premise the fact that the individual knowingly

manipulates information.

Information Distortion

On the other hand, information distortion may or may not be deliberate on the part of the participant.

Deliberate information distortion might take the form of converting real numbers to percentages. For example, if a population is three, and two of the three think in a particular way, it is one thing to state that an overwhelming majority of 67 percent agreed on an issue and an entirely different thing to say that a full 1/3 of the population bitterly opposed the issue. Although both statements are true, the information presented gives two different perspectives about the same idea.

However, the distortion may not be deliberate. Handy (1976:233) said, "The perceptual bias that goes with any role can lead to distortion of information." That is, the perspective of the administrator would, by virtue of his position, be different from that of his combatant.

In any case, the distortion of information, whether intended or not, is a tactic which may be used in educational administration conflict.

Information Channels

Controlling "who gets what information when", is a tactic suggested by Handy. Informal communication links, community cliques and dissemination of information to selected individuals are all means of channelling important

information.

Frohock (1979:50), when discussing decision-making, alluded to the importance of information channels. He stated that "Information is typically inadequate because of (a) acquisition problems and (b) knowledge problems." If, as Frohock argued, acquiring information is problematic, then it follows that if one can control the opponent's access to information one can increase the other's uncertainty and make his position less secure.

Further, Hoy and Miskel (1978:60), quoting Charles Page, indicated that in the informal organization "As a communication vehicle, the grapevine often provides efficient machinery." In orther words, controlling the unofficial communication vehicle would be an advantage to an antagonist, a tactic to be used if necessary.

Rules and Regulations

The use, or imposition, of official rules and regulations can also be regarded as a tactic. Typically those rules and regulations originate in either statute or school board policy statements.

Handy (p. 233) said that those who ". . . feel their influence neglected will seek to impose rules, regulations and official requirements . . ." on other groups or individuals as a tactic in conflict. Official organizational norms can be imposed by one party upon another in order to further the espoused ideal.

Perrow (1979:27) stated that ". . . rules are the basis of self-protection, predictability, and autonomy for the units in an organization." Following Perrow and Handy it would seem logical that the imposition or development of rules and regulations could be used in a conflict as a tactic.

Control of Rewards

Handy recognized manipulation of rewards to further the cause of the antagonist as a tactic in an organizational conflict.

Baldridge (1971:191-192) clearly indicated that educational systems were political systems. In addition, Kelley (1968:62-63) said that in a political system there is a procedure to "control rewards" to effect a particular distribution of values. Therefore, the control of rewards was proposed as a tactic which might have been used by the educational administrators in this study.

Denigration

Denigration, casting aspersions or tale-telling regarding the other antagonist is a common tactic used in conflict. Flaws in the arguments, character or personality of the opposition are isolated and dwelt upon at some length.

Others

All the above tactics outlined by Handy appear plausible. However, other tactics were not addressed by Handy.

Coalition Formation

As indicated earlier, educational systems are political systems. Housego (1971:45) said:

> . . . the study of politics must take into account the following two assumptions:
> 1. that each person seeks to have his own way in life; and
> 2. that men are bound to live together in groups.

Further, Brown (1973:5) posited:

> A fundamental political activity which may be observed in a wide variety of settings is the formation of some formal or informal groups designed to control some decision of general interest. This activity is commonly referred to as the process of forming coalitions.

As well, Goennings and others (1970:7) indicated that "Coalitions are seen as events in a process." Assuming that educational systems are political, people seek their own way, and coalition formation is a fundamental event in a process, it would seem reasonable that educational administrators would use coalition formation as a tactic in a conflict. Therefore, the formation of coalitions was proposed as a tactic in this investigation.

Withdrawal

Second, a number of researchers including Thomas (1976:922) and Stepsis (1974:143), have documented total avoidance or withdrawal from a conflict as being characteristic of some antagonists. Refusal to participate at some stage of an episode can be implied as being a strategy employed by an antagonist.

Appearing to Lose

Finally, Peters (1955:97) documented a collective bargaining tactic often used by professional negotiators. That tactic is allowing the other party to win or appear to win in order to further one's own end and hasten closure. It would seem reasonable that the tactic of appearing to lose would be used by administrators involved in conflict.

SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the phenomenon of conflict as well as a model of the dynamics of the process of conflict. Further, a list of tactics employed by combatants in a conflict was developed from the literature. The list included:

1. information control
2. information distortion
3. information channels
4. rules and regulations
5. control of rewards
6. denigration
7. coalition formation
8. withdrawal
9. appearing to lose.

In the balance of the thesis these tactics are explored in light of the data collected.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

This chapter contains a description of the research design, the data source, and the methodology.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Selltiz and others (1951:50) stated that the purposes of research fell into four broad groupings. One purpose, called formulative or exploratory, was ". . . to gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it . . ." They also said that ". . . the major emphasis is on discovery of ideas and insights . . ." and "Therefore, the research design must be flexible enough to permit the consideration of many different aspects of a phenomenon." The nature of this study would allow it to be typed as a formulative or exploratory study as outlined by Selltiz and others. The data for this study were collected by in-depth personal interviews using Flanagan's critical incident research technique.

When describing the technique, Flanagan (1954:327) pointed out that:

> The critical incident technique consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems

> and developing broad psychological principles. The critical incident technique outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance and meeting systematically defined criteria.

Flanagan (1954:327) explained the words "incident" and "critical."

> By an incident is meant any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act. To be critical, an incident must occur in a situation where the purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to the observer to leave little doubt concerning its effects.

Since Flanagan developed the technique many researchers have successfully used the procedure in a variety of disciplines such as physical education, psychology and clinical psychology. Dainis (1979), Lowenberg (1979) and Erlandson (1979) all used the method.

Dunnette (1966:79-80) outlined four criteria upon which he said all critical incident research must be based. They were related to the identification of the following information about the incident:

1. the facts leading up to the incident;
2. what exactly the person being interviewed did in the incident;
3. what the consequences of the critical behavior were; and
4. whether the consequences were within the control of the individual.

Dunnette indicated that the data were gathered in "story or

anecdote" form.

Dunnette (1966:80) also supported the procedure in glowing terms.

> It (critical incident technique) is a brilliant search technique--startlingly simple in conception, yet fulfilling perfectly the behavioral description requirements of our definition of job analysis.

The collection of the data for this study was couched in the principles outlined by Flanagan and the criteria described by Dunnette. Each administrator was asked to recall a conflict and to describe in detail the facts leading up to the episode, the conflict itself, the time frame of the conflict, the number of individuals involved and other pertinent information. As each related conflict evolved, the researcher noted the tactics the Director or Superintendent employed in the conflict and their frequency in the episode. At the close of the interview, each respondent was given the opportunity to peruse the results and make comments on the researcher's categorization of the tactics.

DATA SOURCE

The data for this study were obtained from Directors and Superintendents of Education in Saskatchewan. There were 87 such positions in that province in 1980. Twenty-four were randomly selected and the administrators holding those positions were interviewed. This number represented 27.6 percent of the total population.

The data were gathered and analyzed in blocks of five interviews. After four such blocks, no new information was forthcoming from the data. Therefore, an additional four interviews were conducted as a check against the first twenty. No new data came from the final four interviews and the collection ended at that point. The researcher was willing to conduct more interviews but there was no apparent need and the data collection terminated after the twenty-fourth interview.

METHODOLOGY

Prior to the collection of data for this study, three pilot interviews were done with students to sharpen the researcher's interview skills as well as to determine whether distinct tactics could be discovered. Also, the test interviews helped in the development of the research technique and in the development of the data recording sheet.

During the course of the collection of the data for the study all of the 24 respondents except one agreed to have the interview recorded. They were asked to describe in detail a conflict episode in which they were involved, and each described an incident where he was one of the participants. The interview was unstructured at that phase except for questions asked by the researcher for clarification. At the end of the episode description the tactics mentioned by the respondent were further explored. The circumstances surrounding the tactics, the short and

long-term effects of the tactics, as well as reactions of the actors to the tactics were discussed with the respondent. Thus, each tactic was noted and its importance to the episode documented.

When all the data had been collected, the interviews were transcribed by the writer. A short scenario, which included the basic facts of the confict, the tactics noted and the outcome of the incident, was written for each episode. The two were added to the data sheet to form a unit of information for each respondent.

Reliability

The question of reliability of data in any research project is problematic. Fox (1969:352) indicated that reliability is ". . . the basic attribute which every procedure must possess." On the other hand, Chassan (1979:265) stated that "It is apparent that reliability is a relative matter and that the preference for one instrument over another insofar as reliability is concerned is a matter of degree." Establishing reliability of categorization of verbal data seems particularly difficult.

However, Gottschalk (1979:120,548,813) employed three reliability tests, namely test-retest, odd-even and interrater, in order to determine a satisfactory procedure for ascertaining reliability of verbal data. He found (p. 120) that "Reliability studies revealed satisfactory interrater and intrarater co-efficients of reliability."

Therefore, it was decided to use an interrater method to determine the reliability of the coding in this study.

Gottschalk (1979:813) stated that in the interrater procedure, knowledgeable, competent individuals were given ". . . short excerpts of written verbal samples . . ." and asked to categorize the data according to a pre-determined set of criteria. The results of the coding were then checked against the results previously coded by the researcher. He said a correlation of .8 was good.

For this study, two individuals were given a set of 15 statements from the data which represented most tactic categories. As well, each was supplied with a list of the tactics plus a brief description of each as outlined in Chapter 2. The individuals were asked to match the tactic statements with the tactic descriptions. The first person's coding of the tactics agreed with 12 of the 15 as coded by the writer; the second agreed with 13 of the 15. Therefore, it would seem that the categorization of the tactics by the researcher was reliable.

Validity

To insure accuracy of the transcription, the scenario and the data sheet, five individuals in the Department of Educational Administration were given the data units, along with the appropriate tape, to check the researcher's work. No discrepancies were discovered.

As well, three of the units of data were pulled at

random from the file and copies sent to the respondents who had volunteered the information. Each was asked to check the data for accuracy of transcription (as best he could remember) as well as accuracy of fact. All of the respondents agreed that both facts and transcripts were accurate.

Analysis of Data

The technique used to analyze the verbal data for this thesis was content analysis described by Fox (1969:646). He defined the process:

> Content analysis is defined as a procedure for the categorization of verbal or behavioral data, for the purposes of classification, summarization and tabulation. It is an intriguing process . . . in which the researcher plays a strong individual and creative role.

The process is by no means new or innovative. George (1959:11) and Fox (1969:647) both indicated that the analysis of verbal data was often used during World War II when analysts were examining speeches and propaganda literature which emanated from Russia and Germany.

George (1959:8-9) indicated that this kind of analysis was used to designate:

> 1. The preliminary reading of communications materials for purposes of hypothesis formation and the discovery of new relationships as against systematic content analysis for purposes of testing hypotheses.
> 2. An impressionistic procedure for making observations about content characteristics as against a systematic procedure for obtaining precise, objective, and reliable data.
> 3. Dichotomous attributes (i.e., attributes which can be predicted only as belonging or not belonging

> to an object) as against attributes which permit exact measurement (i.e., the true quantitative variable) or rank ordering.
>
> 4. A flexible procedure for making content-descriptive observations, or coding judgments as against a rigid procedure for doing the same.

As stated previously, content analysis outlined by George (1959:10-11) was used in this study. That is, ". . . the nonfrequency approach utilizes the mere occurrence or nonoccurrence of attributes (as against their frequency distributions) for the purposes of inference." (George, p.11). Stated another way, in this study the frequency with which a respondent used a tactic was not important; what was important was whether or not he did in fact employ the tactic.

Also, the selection of appropriate categories to reflect the nature of the study is of vital importance. Simon (1978:214) said:

> The most important decision in content analysis involves the choices of categories which most accurately represent the ideas of concepts you want to measure.

To that end, the list of tactics developed in Chapter 2 was a starting point for the data analysis.

Finally, Fox (1969:678-679) cautioned researchers using content analysis to develop a code, or a set of categories, before attempting to analyze the data. However, the researcher must be sensitive to the creation of new categories. If such a category is discovered, all previously examined information must be rechecked for the possible existence of the new category in the old data.

That requirement was met in this study. New tactics were found and all preceding data were re-examined for evidence of the new tactic.

SUMMARY

In Chapter 3, the research design, the source of data, the methodology and the data analysis for the investigation were outlined. As well, the questions of validity and reliability were addressed. The data were collected using the critical incident research technique; they were examined by the use of content analysis.

The limitations of critical incident research must be recognized in a study of this type. First, reliability is difficult to check. The choice of the incident is up to the respondent and this will influence the type of information. Perhaps most important is the fact that in this kind of study the researcher is vital as he or she interprets the data and makes meaning of the findings, more so than in survey research.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter the data are examined with the view to addressing the major problem of the study which was the identification and examination of tactics employed by educational administrators when dealing with organizational conflict. Further, all of the sub-problems, as well as the ancillary problem, posed in Chapter 1 are explored.

In accordance with Flanagan's critical incident research technique, each administrator was asked to describe in detail a conflict in which he had been an active participant. Particular emphasis was given to the things he did which led to the resolution of the conflict episode. These tactics were noted and categorized according to the nine categories outlined in Chapter 2. Furthermore, four additional new categories were created from the interview data.

Some respondents said that they had attempted to "buy time" when they were involved in a conflict. It was apparent that this buying of time process was a tactic. Therefore, "stalling for time" was created as a tactic.

As well, some respondents indicated that they had deliberately made efforts to destroy their opponent's

support. The administrators did not seem particularly worried whether or not they received that support, as long as the other participant did not. That process was called "coalition destruction" and appears as a tactic in the balance of this document.

A few of the Directors reported attempts to manipulate the physical setting of a conflict. By influencing the environment within which the episode took place they hoped to control the conflict. That procedure was labelled "environment control."

The last, new category which was created was "naivete." One respondent used the tactic exclusively. He was new to the position and he simply played dumb throughout the entire conflict episode.

The reader is cautioned that, due to the sensitive nature of some of the data, some of the verbatim quotes which follow were disguised to protect the anonymity of the respondent. Although the substance of the data remains accurate and consistent, some facts were altered. This alteration was accomplished in two ways. First, references to specific times, dates or places were deleted from the text. Second, the researcher changed the gender of some of the people referred to by the respondent.

The reader is further forewarned that although 24 interviews were conducted and analyzed, the verbatim quotes following were taken from only 16 interviews. Two of the interviews could not be directly used because of the

substance of the described episode. Also, some respondents used more tactics and therefore, they are quoted more frequently.

In order to give the reader a more intimate understanding of the interviews, four of them (respondents 2,4,19 and 22) are found in Appendix A (p. 150). The interviews are given verbatim except for extraneous verbage. Those four were chosen because each involved numerous tactics, each was relatively short, the anecdotes were interesting and they are typical of the balance of the interviews.

Finally, the sensitive nature of some of the interviews would not allow the researcher to develop fully each tactic for each respondent. Also, two of the interviews were not taped (respondent 3 because of a technical problem and respondent 20 because the Director refused) and the writer made on-the-spot categorizations.

Respondent #1

Age	38 years
Total experience	13 years
Present job experience	5 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. The administrator was in conflict with a teacher over a recess-noon hour supervision schedule. The teacher had a history of being rather polemic with school administration and the Director was in the position

where he was forced to become a party in the conflict.

The teacher had defied the school principal regarding the supervision schedule and had refused to meet the principal to discuss the matter. He had had similar trouble with the teacher before and became determined to do something about the teacher.

The Director informed several trustees of the situation and received support for the proposed termination of contract with the teacher. He then phoned the principal and told him briefly of his intentions and indicated to him that he would be at the school that day to meet with the teacher. He also told the principal not to tell the teacher he was coming.

Subsequently, he arrived at the school, met with the teacher and accepted her resignation. Although the teacher was "a thorn in the side of the administration", she was a competent teacher. Some opposition to his actions was encountered from the staff. However, the Director and the school principal were able to counteract the ramifications by "working very hard with the staff."

The tactics. Information control was an obvious tactic employed by this administrator. He arranged the final meeting with the teacher without her knowledge, yet trustees and the principal were aware of it. At the meeting he recounted her past performance indicating that although she was competent she was a disruption; her strengths were

not emphasized as much as were her weaknesses.

Furthermore, the Director used rules and regulations to advance his cause. He used his legal authority to supervise and evaluate professional staff to garner the resignation from the teacher.

Finally, by checking his proposed actions with trustees, he was forming a coalition against the teacher. Also, by working very hard with the staff after the termination he guaranteed a united front against any more disruption from the teacher.

The tactics used in this incident were (a) information control, (b) rules and regulations, and (c) coalition formation.

Respondent #2

Age	36 years
Total experience	14 years
Present job experience	4 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. The Saskatchewan School Trustees Association saw a set of resource materials as being unsuitable for Saskatchewan schools on the grounds that they were "questionable resource materials", and stated so in a memo to all school boards in the province. The Director was asked to investigate the matter and he found nothing objectionable about the materials. Workshops and inservice sessions were organized to help teachers use the series.

However, a pressure group within the community, headed by a clergyman, made representation to the board, while the Director was on holidays, urging the board to reconsider the materials and withdraw them from the schools. At the first board meeting after the Director returned from holidays, a motion was passed requesting the Director to collect all the materials and return them to their source. Although the Director argued against the motion, it was passed and the Director complied with the substance of the directive.

The tactics. Information control as a tactic was evident in this episode. The administrator, after being directed by his board to withdraw the materials, merely gave each trustee a set of materials to read. He made them responsible for reading the materials and then judging the worthiness, knowing full well that the trustees would not read the information.

The distortion of information was also present. When trying to explain the situation to his principals, the Director indicated clearly that he did not report factually to the principals.

The Director also used a specific information channel as a tactic. He believed his main antagonist in the conflict to be a non-trustee clergyman, consequently he chose to "approach it from an educational philosophical angle." He deliberately decided to use a perspective entirely different

in the presentation of his information.

Denigration was also evident as a tactic. At the confrontation meeting with his board he told them, quite directly, that he believed that they were operating from a narrow and a shallow point of view; clearly evidence of denigration.

The administrator also used coalition formation as a tactic when he talked privately to the trustees. Although he felt they were on his side he could not win them over completely because his opposition had more clout. Nevertheless, coalition formation was used as a tactic.

This interview yielded evidence of the following tactics (a) information control, (b) information distortion, (c) information channels, (d) denigration, and (e) coalition formation.

Respondent #3

Age	55 years
Total experience	34 years
Present job experience	16 years
Training	5 years

The scenario. In this instance, the administrator was in conflict with the district board of trustees over a school closure. The division board of education sent the Director to a meeting to inform the local board and electors that the school would not be operating the next school year.

The tactics. The only tactic used by this administrator was the imposition of rules and regulations. His employing board gave him a directive and he fulfilled the mandate as best he could.

Respondent #4

Age	50 years
Total experience	29 years
Present job experience	10 years
Training	7 years

The scenario. The Director, after a confrontation meeting with two principals, asked for the resignation of one of them. Five years previous, the Director had tried to "get" the principal but had failed due to lack of local support. A new trustee was elected and he was "horrified at this ineptness" on the part of the principal. The reason for the demotion of the principal was general poor administrative skill. Failure to fill forms, leaving school during school hours without permission, being late to school, and poor relations with trustees all were viewed as part of the ineffectiveness of the principal.

At the confrontation meeting the Director made it clear to the principals that he was withdrawing support for them and that if things would go wrong in the future they could expect no help from him. Shortly after the meeting, the Director, after receiving a series of complaints from his board and the community, requested and received the one

principal's resignation.

Although the principal was a relatively young man, he stepped down from the principalship. All parties concerned are satisfied with the present arrangement.

The tactics. In this episode the administrator controlled information in a number of ways. First, the meetings with the two principals was an attempt by the Director to elicit different administrative behaviour from the principals. Also, writing letters to chastise the one principal can be viewed as information control. As well, the director witheld information regarding the actual resignation from the board and from others and that constitutes control of information.

The Director also found it necessary to be selective about how information was given to the district board of trustees. He felt compelled to attend the meetings of the local board to ensure that the trustees were getting the kind of information he felt they should be getting.

The imposition of rules and regulations as a tactic is obvious. The meeting with the principals where they "let it all hang out" and where he said he was "through supporting" them was evidence of rules and regulations. Further, when the Director simply asked the principal for the resignation, he was using the legal authority vested in him.

The use of denigration as a tactic was evident when the administrator "called him one of the most ineffective

administrators he had encountered." It was a deliberate move by the director to belittle the principal.

Finally, the formation of coalitions was also evident in this interview. The Director asked his assistant into meetings with the two principals in order to even the odds and make the situation "two on two rather than one on two." Also, the alliance between the new sub-division trustee (who was "horrified at this ineptness") and the Director supports the coalition formation notion.

In sum, interview #4 contained the tactics of (a) information control, (b) information channels, (c) rules and regulations, (d) denigration, and (e) coalition formation.

Respondent #5

Age	36 years
Total experience	13 years
Present job experience	2 years
Training	7 years

The scenario. The administrator, in this case, was faced with a jurisdiction-wide staff reduction due to declining enrolments. He had done a good deal of preparatory work and the policy was being implemented smoothly. A motion was passed at a division board meeting to terminate a teacher's contract in one of the schools, due to redundancy.

The Director, armed with the formal motion, informed the local board, the teacher and the school principal.

Although the redundant teacher was "a pillar of the community", there was very little initial negative feedback from any of the concerned parties.

However, at the next division board meeting, the sub-division trustee from the area where the redundancy had occurred, made a motion to rescind the original motion. The Director was surprised by the change of heart, and the conflict which ensued resulted in the discussing of the rescind motion. The motion was tabled, but finally, two months later, it was passed.

The tactics. At the meeting the administrator became very angry and he used denigration as a tactic. He told his board very pointedly that he was not happy with the proposed reversal. He said that it cast his credibility as the chief executive officer in doubt. He also told the trustee in question that this change of heart was typical of that community and that he had incorrectly thought the trustee had more fortitude than he was displaying. He further said that there had better not be any more surprises of this nature because he was prepared to be less than honest with them in the future when dealing with sensitive issues such as redundancy.

Another tactic employed by the Director was the imposition of rules and regulations. When the conflict was taking place he said to the board that he could have handled the situation differently, but the official motion armed him

to handle the situation the way he did. However, he said he would be conducting himself according to the guidelines of duties of directors as outlined in provincial legislation. He would go no further than the requirements stipulated.

The two tactics this administrator employed were (a) denigration and (b) rules and regulations.

Respondent #6

Age	39 years
Total experience	16 years
Present job experience	5 years
Training	7 years

The scenario. Because of a late resignation, the Director was forced to hire a teacher for an administrative position who was not trained for either the position or the teaching load which went with it. The teacher experienced difficulty handling the subject load, but was successful and popular in his administrative position.

However, the division board and the principals held a joint meeting in the spring of the year and the impression that the teacher-principal left with the trustees was quite negative. Subsequently, and in light of the poor classroom performance of the individual, the board terminated his contract.

The staff of the school, on the other hand, felt the termination was unjust and made its feelings known to the division board by way of a petition which called for the

reinstatement of the principal.

In the meantime, a position on the same school staff, which was more suited to the person's background, became available. Therefore, a compromise was reached and the teacher was offered the vacant position.

The tactics. The tactic of information control was evident in this interview. The Director was aware of the pending resignation of the teacher from the position which was more suited to the individual. He did not share that knowledge with either the board or the teacher-principal. The person who was going to resign had some personal problems which required attention and he was anxious that his resignation not become an issue. The Director kept the information to himself until such time as it became expedient to use it. He probably should have shared the knowledge sooner, but he did not choose to do so.

Selecting information channels was another tactic used by this Director. When the teacher-principal protested the termination the Director encouraged the teacher-principal to discuss the matter with the board at a board meeting. Although, by law, the teacher-principal had a right to appear at a meeting, he had foregone that right. The petition changed his mind and, although he could have been refused a hearing, the Director encouraged the meeting. Thus, rather than the Director acting as an interpreter for board and teacher, he set up the direct meeting.

The imposition of rules and regulations was also used as a tactic. The Director wrote an official evaluation report on the teacher which was negative. That report, coupled with the disastrous board-administration meeting, assured the motion to terminate.

Finally, the Director employed the tactic of denigration. In the interview he said, "I told him he had a rotten personality." Clearly it was denigration of the opponent.

In this episode there was evidence of the four tactics of (a) information control, (b) information channels, (c) rules and regulations, and (d) denigration.

Respondent #7

Age	41 years
Total experience	22 years
Present job experience	8 years
Training	7 years

The scenario. In this case, the administrator was in conflict with a district board of trustees regarding the establishment of school policies and procedures. A new principal wanted to make changes in the scheduling of events in the school, but the local board stonewalled his ideas and would not formally support the changes. The principal appealed to the Director and convinced him to support the proposed changes. The Director, who had for some time believed that the local board had had too much influence in

professional matters, decided he would confront the district board on the issue.

A meeting, with local board, teachers, two division board trustees, principal, Director and students in attendance, was held. The upshot of that meeting was majority support for the Director.

The tactics. The Director said that his tactics were simple and straightforward. Initially, he formed coalitions in the community, the school and on the division board. Then, about two months later, he asked those allies to a meeting.

At that meeting he used environment control as a tactic. He placed his best community ally directly across the table from the chairman of the district board of trustees. Furthermore, he arranged for a virtual gallery of people to sit behind him and his supporters at the meeting.

In summation, this Director used the tactics of (a) coalition formation and (b) environment control.

Respondent #8

Age	47 years
Total experience	29 years
Present job experience	9 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. In this episode the divisional school board in question experienced a large turn-over of

trustees. Those new trustees felt that some policy changes were in order regarding the large centralized high school in the division. The administrator was in conflict with the board over those proposed unilateral changes.

At the outset of the conflict, the Director was able to slow the policy development process down to the point where he was able to gain some support for his point of view. After a series of maneuvers, a set of policies was developed which was satisfactory for all concerned.

The tactics. The Director, upon first becoming aware of the intentions of the new board, was, in his words, able to buy some time. He successfully used the tactic of stalling for time.

The second tactic he employed was information control. He did a great deal of reading on the subject of policy development as well as other similiar policies which he obtained from other jurisdictions in the province. Then he distributed the information to appropriate and sympathetic people in the division.

Furthermore, he met with the Students' Representative Council about the matter as well as a convenient parent organization. This would indicate that he employed coalition formation as a tactic.

Finally, he asked one or two key division board trustees to attend the aforementioned meetings and to help in the design of a questionnaire on the subject. That would

be indicative of the tactic of coalition destruction in that he hoped to lessen opposition to his proposal when it came for final decision at the board table.

This administrator used the tactics of (a) stall for time, (b) information control, (c) coalition formation, and (d) coalition-destruction.

Respondent #9

Age	48 years
Total experience	28 years
Present job experience	2 years
Training	7 years

The scenario. In this episode, the administrator was in conflict with his divisional board regarding an issue related to teacher supervision and evaluation. Shortly after his appointment to his position, the board, without any prior consultation, passed a motion which required its principals to submit yearly written reports on all of their teachers.

The administrator took issue with the board on the decision for two reasons. First, he felt that the writing of evaluative reports was his domain. Second, the principals felt there were many ethical concerns which would be left unanswered if they were to write formal reports, and the administrator strongly agreed with their point of view.

As the situation developed, the administrator did a number of things which ultimately led to a compromise.

The official motion was not changed, but the reports were given to the administrator and delivered verbally to the board.

The tactics. The control of information was an important tactic used by this administrator. He had recently completed a course in teacher evaluation and he compiled a large amount of the information he had received at the class, copied it and gave it to the trustees to read. All of the information supported his arguments.

The fact that he gave only selected material, material which was supportive of his perspective, would indicate the use of information distortion as a tactic. Disseminating information about clinical supervision which is only positive is a distortion of what the process is about.

As well, the administrator employed information channels as a tactic in his conflict. Prior to a meeting of his principals' group and the division board to discuss the matter, the administrator held a long discussion with the spokesman for the principals. He schooled the spokesman in the personal strengths and weaknesses of the trustees, particularly the chairman.

The last tactic the administrator used was the imposition of rules and regulations. On several occasions during the episode, the administrator emphatically pointed out to the board that The Education Act made no provision for

principals to formally evaluate teachers. Consequently, he could not support the board's position in the matter.

In summary, this administrator used the tactics of (a) information control, (b) information distortion, (c) information channels, and (d) rules and regulations.

Respondent #10

Age	38 years
Total experience	15 years
Present job experience	7 years
Training	7 years

The scenario. This conflict developed when the administrator, new to his position, told his divisional board that a procedure the board used at its meetings was unconventional. He also questioned the board's wisdom in employing the procedure. Over a period of approximately four months, the Director was able to change the board's attitude.

The tactics. The board's initial reaction to the Director's statement was surprise and anger. To counteract those feelings, the Director said that, although he felt the issue was important, he would not pursue it immediately. Also, he said he would do some checking and see what similar boards were doing. However, he did not do any checking. Clearly, he employed stalling for time as a tactic.

Finally, before the meeting where the issue would again be discussed, the Director met privately and

individually with some of the trustees to try to convince them to support his point of view. That maneuver is indicative of coalition formation.

This administrator used the tactics of (a) stall for time and (b) coalition formation.

Respondent #11

Age	45 years
Total experience	22 years
Present job experience	9 years
Training	8 years

The scenario. In this episode, the Director was in conflict with one of his principals with regards to the competence of a teacher on his staff. The teacher was a neophyte in charge of a new and highly specialized program. The principal and the Director were, at that point, in agreement that the teacher would have to be dismissed.

However, some members of the community found out about the impending termination and, out of fear of losing the program, brought pressure to bear on the principal to ensure that the teacher not be released. The principal publicly reversed his position and left the Director on his own to deal with the situation.

The board of education, upon the recommendation of the Director, passed a motion to terminate the teacher's contract. But there was conflict between the Director and the principal. In the ensuing months the Director attempted

to make the principal aware of the error of his ways and to elicit from the principal administrative behaviour which was more congruent with the philosophy of the Director.

The tactics. During the conflict, the Director used information control as a tactic. At one point the Director became aware of the fact that the teachers on the principal's staff were not receiving information as quickly as they should. Consequently, the Director mailed correspondence from the office directly to the teachers' home addresses rather than leave the distribution to the principal at the school.

A second tactic used by the Director was the imposition of rules and regulations. When the conflict between the two was at its height, the Director made an issue of the fact that the principal had not visited the dismissed teacher's classroom. That school division has policy which requires its principals to do some classroom supervision. The principal failed to make visits and, therefore, the Director used that as an issue when he told the principal that he was going to have to "clean up his act."

Another tactic employed by the Director was coalition formation. He indicated that some teachers had, in the past, complained about the principal. While the conflict was going on he said that ". . . the teachers were coming to me about it . . ." and that he did not discourage the practice.

In the event that the principal might be demoted, the administrator was forming a coalition to aid him.

Tactics used in this episode were (a) information control, (b) rules and regulations, and (c) coalition formation.

Respondent #12

Age	42 years
Total experience	17 years
Present job experience	3 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. This administrator was in conflict with a teacher over a competency issue which culminated in the dismissal of the teacher. The Director was faced with the problem shortly after assuming his position.

The teacher in question was close to retirement, but the teachers, the principal and the community felt strongly that she should be relieved of her duties. The Director made a series of moves which resulted in a mid-year pay-out to the teacher and a termination of contract.

The tactics. The initial reaction of the Director was to delay. He said he bought a little time 'right-off-the-bat' to think about it for awhile. Clearly, he used stalling for time as a tactic.

The second tactic used was denigration. He used the tactic on both the principal and the teacher. When the

principal complained about the teacher to the Director, he berated the principal and told him that until he displayed some courage of his convictions, and gave him a written complaint, he would do nothing. Also, the Director had been told that she was a disruptive force on staff and he confronted her with that fact.

Another tactic which was evident in this episode was coalition formation. The Director made inquiries in the community about the teacher and discovered considerable opposition to the teacher. He received assurances from some of these community members that they would take the stand at a board of reference if they were asked to do so.

Information channels was also used as a tactic. The Director stated that he was in communication with executive assistants of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation as the situation developed.

Finally, the Director employed the imposition of rules and regulations. When the situation was coming to a head, he phoned the division board chairman and requested a special meeting to deal with the matter. At the meeting a formal motion to dismiss the teacher was passed.

There were five tactics used by this administrator. They were (a) stall for time, (b) denigration, (c) coalition formation, (d) information channels, and (e) rules and regulations.

Respondent #13

Age	36 years
Total experience	14 years
Present job experience	1 year
Training	5 years

The scenario. This administrator was in conflict with two outside organizations. They were the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association and The Saskatchewan Department of Education.

The tactics. The Director used the tactics of (a) information control, (b) information channels, and (c) coalition formation.

Respondent #14

Age	45 years
Total experience	21 years
Present job experience	9 years
Training	9 years

The scenario. In this instance, the administrator was in conflict with each of two groups within his organization over the issue of teacher placement within the system. The problem had been a nagging one and had occurred each spring for a number of years. Prior to this session he had vowed to deal once and for all with the matter if it were to come up again. Not surprisingly, the problem did re-occur and the Director dealt with it swiftly and pointedly.

He called a meeting of both parties and resolved the matter by face-to-face confrontation.

The tactics. The first tactic the Director used was information control. The same day the problem arose, he searched his own files for all information relating to teacher transfers. He gave that information to the spokesmen for the two groups.

Secondly, he called the meeting for the next day and he deliberately chose the boardroom as the setting. He sat the two parties across the table from each other and he took a seat away from the two groups. He controlled the setting, or the environment, of the meeting.

Third, he indicated to the two groups that he was no longer prepared to take any more flak about the matter and they were to come up with a solution with no input from him whatsoever. He simply withdrew from the ensuing conflict until a settlement was achieved.

This administrator used the tactics of (a) information control, (b) environment control, and (c) withdrawal.

Respondent #15

Age	51 years
Total experience	30 years
Present job experience	8 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. This administrator was in conflict with his secretary-treasurer over the salary and benefits which the Director received. At a board meeting, early in the school year, the Director was shocked when a motion was made and passed to eliminate the Director's car allowance. Upon questioning the board at the meeting it became apparent that the secretary-treasurer had been in contact with the taxation people and he had discovered some tax irregularities. The secretary-treasurer had then reported this to the board and the action was taken.

However, the Director left the meeting determined to recoup his monetary losses. He confronted the secretary-treasurer regarding the matter and he was suspicious that he was involved in a "power struggle" with the secretary. At a subsequent board meeting, he was able to regain his financial position.

The tactics. Information control was evident as a tactic in this episode. Immediately after the first board meeting, the Director began gathering information relating to salaries and fringe benefits for other Saskatchewan Directors of Education. As well, he made some queries of his own at the Federal Department of Revenue and found that his jurisdiction was "the only area in the south to be investigated by the department." This led him to the conclusion that the secretary had "turned him in."

Armed with the aforesaid information, the Director

met informally with each trustee on his board and pleaded his case. Clearly, he was using coalition formation as a tactic.

Finally, he imposed rules and regulations at a subsequent meeting of the board when he demanded that his contract be opened for negotiations. He also demanded that the secretary-treasurer be excluded from the deliberations. Both requests were granted and the Director was able to renegotiate his salary so that the difference in salary more than made up for the loss of the car allowance.

This administrator used the tactics of (a) information control, (b) coalition formation, and (c) rules and regulations.

Respondent #16

Age	40 years
Total experience	21 years
Present job experience	9 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. This administrator was in conflict with teachers in a school in his jurisdiction who did not support the decision regarding the appointment of a new principal in their school. A particularly polemic teacher became spokesman for the group and a short conflict between teachers and the Director resulted.

The Director called a staff meeting and formally crushed the opposition. However, prior to the meeting he

had done a number of things which furthered his cause.

The tactics. The imposition of rules and regulations as a tactic was obvious in this instance. By calling the staff meeting and publicly supporting the principal he used his legal status as a tactic.

Second, both he and the principal measured staff and community support before the staff meeting and found that many people, in the community and on staff, were encouraging them to stop the actions of this group. That would indicate that coalition formation was a tactic.

Finally, the Director found out that the group of teachers had called a clandestine staff meeting which excluded both himself and the principal. The Director said that when he heard about the proposed meeting, he talked to a few people with the result that the meeting "fizzled out." Coalition destruction was used as a tactic.

In this interview there was evidence of the tactics of (a) rules and regulations, (b) coalition formation, and (c) coalition destruction.

Respondent #17

Age	53 years
Total experience	32 years
Present job experience	2 years
Training	5 years

The scenario. This newly appointed Director was

determined to introduce a new program in the jurisdiction. He knew the board did not want the program, yet he proceeded with plans to introduce it anyway. When the board discovered the Director's plans, a conflict ensued.

The tactics. The only tactic this Director employed was naivete. Throughout the whole conflict he just "played dumb", and after three months the program was approved in a formal motion by the division board. The plans were made and the groundwork had been done, consequently the board decided to try the program for a year.

Respondent #18

Age	37 years
Total experience	17 years
Present job experience	1 year
Training	6 years

The scenario. The administrator in this episode was in conflict with a principal in his jurisdiction who was in conflict with a member of the community. The principal was having a disagreement with the member of the community over an issue which related to programming. The Director attempted to intervene in the dispute and he then became the focus of the principal's frustration.

The conflict between the community member and the principal had become quite volatile, and they were going so

far as writing letters about each other in the local newspaper. The principal also sent a newsletter home to parents about the matter.

At that point the Director stepped in and attempted to bring some peace to the community. However, after approximately one week, he was forced to withdraw from the conflict, and the sub-divisional trustee was called upon and the initial conflict between the principal and the citizen was resolved. The Director-principal disagreement then disappeared.

The tactics. The control of information was used as a tactic. The Director made a conscious decision not to share the details of the conflict with the board of education. Although the situation could easily have become very difficult, he decided not to discuss the matter with the entire board.

Secondly, the Director distorted some information he gave to the principal. When the principal asked him where he stood on the programming matter, the administrator gave him only what he felt were the negative aspects. By giving only one side of the matter, he deliberately left the principal with the wrong feeling as to where he stood.

Last, by turning the matter over to the sub-division trustee, the Director was bound to give him as much information as he had. By doing so he chose to give one person information. This action can be viewed as using a

specific information channel as a tactic.

This administrator used the tactics of (a) information control, (b) information distortion, and (c) information channels.

Respondent #19

Age	36 years
Total experience	16 years
Present job experience	1 year
Training	6 years

The scenario. This administrator was in conflict with his principals over a school scheduling issue. Specifically, the principals in the jurisdiction felt that they required more administration time on their timetables. The administrator had been a principal in the jurisdiction and he viewed the conflict as being more than a simple scheduling problem. He saw the ensuing conflict as a test by his principals of his administrative style and decision making process.

The tactics. The interview provides clear evidence of six tactics. Controlling information was a tactic used by this Director. The collection, analysis and distribution of the provincial statistics was evidence of information control. Also, at the confrontation meeting, his preliminary remarks took 40 minutes to complete which would be indicative of information overkill.

Also, this administrator distorted information which he gave to the principals. He "created the percentage" and "chose the information very carefully." Changing actual numbers to percentages is in and of itself a distortion.

The tactic of reward control also emerged as a tactic from these data. The administrator deliberately let it be known that the annual fall retreat of principals was in jeopardy.

Further, stalling for time was a tactic employed by this administrator. Despite the fact that the principals wanted a meeting immediately, they set a meeting for one week later. He stalled for the time he felt he required to prepare adequately for the meeting.

Finally, the control of the environment of the meeting was used as a tactic by the Director. He set the agenda for the meeting; he decided that there would be minor issues discussed before the scheduling issue; and he requested the secretary-treasurer be present at the beginning of the meeting to deal with other trivial matters.

In conclusion, this respondent used the tactics of (a) information control, (b) information distortion, (c) reward control, (d) coalition formation, (e) stall for time, and (f) environment control.

Respondent #20

Age	46 years
Total experience	24 years

Present job experience	9 years
Training	5 years

The scenario. This administrator refused to allow the interview to be taped. He also refused to grant the writer permission to make notes during the interview.

The Director discovered that a principal, whom he had sent to a professional development seminar, did not attend the seminar. The principal had left school and driven to the site of the conference, but he did not attend. After the discovery he confronted the principal.

The tactics. After the administrator found out about the principal's absence, he decided to "buy some time." A trustee had brought the matter to his attention and he decided he needed some time to think about what he would do, so he stalled for time.

About a week later, the Director confronted the principal and informed him of his displeasure and told the principal that he felt that his conduct was unbecoming and unprofessional. He also said that future applications for conference attendance were in jeopardy. He used rules and regulations as a tactic.

When the principal asked the Director where he had received his information, the Director refused to share the source. Thus he used information control as a tactic.

This administrator used the tactics of (a) stall for time, (b) rules and regulations, and (c) information

control.

Respondent #21

Age	36 years
Total experience	17 years
Present job experience	3 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. This administrator described, at great length, the deep and continuing difference in perception between himself and his board regarding the role of and expectations for a chief executive officer. He stated quite emphatically that the distance between himself and the board on this issue affected almost everything he did in his job. He said that the issue never surfaced in a serious confrontation, but by hints and suggestion the board made it clear to him that they did not agree with his perception of the role.

The tactics. The director indicated that the only weapon he had to deal with the conflict was stalling for time. Given time, he felt that the attitude of the board would change. He also said that in the three years he had been working for the board, he felt that there had been a softening of board attitude. However, he did admit that perhaps his attitude was also changing. In any event, this Director deliberately was stalling for time as a tactic.

Respondent #22

Age	38 years
Total experience	13 years
Present job experience	5 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. The administrator, within a few weeks of assuming his office, was confronted by a delegation of parents demanding the firing of a teacher. He told the group he would look into the matter. Several weeks later, a motion was passed at a meeting of electors of the sub-division, in which the teacher was working, requesting the divisional board of education to dismiss the administrator. The grounds for the dismissal, according to that meeting, were incompetence. The administrator was obviously incompetent as he could not himself "recognize incompetence when it was staring him in the face." From that meeting a community member emerged as the leader of a group which had, as its ultimate aim, the re-organization of the entire school division. The leader ran for the divisional board at the next general election and, after a vigorous campaign, was narrowly defeated. The leader then ran for the sub-divisional board of trustees and was successful. The leader then became exceedingly and needlessly critical, both in and out of meetings, and was the cause for a great deal of concern within the jurisdiction. A series of events, some initiated by the

administrator, led to the leader resigning as a trustee some two and one-half years later.

The tactics. The administrator, in this conflict, controlled information in both a formal and an informal way. By writing educational columns in the local newspaper he was able to feed information to the public in an official manner. Informally, he let it be known that the teacher in question would be moved to a different position the next school year. Also, he said that he was counteracting his opponent with information.

Furthermore, choosing to write articles for the paper shows that the selection of proper and appropriate information channels was important to the Director. As well, the fact that he believed his oppositions's mother-in-law was giving information to him, coupled with his actions to stop the dispersion of adverse information, indicates that the selection of, or the closing of, an information channel was a tactic employed by this administrator in this conflict.

The tactic of denigration was also evident in this episode. By confronting the wife of his antagonist over the music issue and subsequently telling her that she and her husband were alike in that they jumped to conclusions and didn't listen to others, he used denigration as a tactic.

Coalition formation was also evident as a tactic in this episode. The administrator deliberately ". . . worked very hard with the local board and with the school staff."

He made a conscious effort to befriend them and have them take his point of view.

Although the incident with the retarded girl which precipitated the final confrontation was beyond the control of the administrator, he seized the opportunity to further his cause. By talking to the chairman prior to the final local board meeting, he seemed to solidify the stand which would be taken by all the trustees.

Finally, coalition destruction as a tactic can also be seen in the data. The administrator said quite openly that he "worked on his cohort", the woman trustee, to aid his own cause. He successfully drew her from his opponent's side to his side.

In sum, the five tactics used by this administrator were (a) information control, (b) information channels, (c) denigration, (d) coalition formation, and (e) coalition destruction.

Respondent #23

Age	39 years
Total experience	18 years
Present job experience	6 years
Training	6 years

The scenario. In this instance, the administrator was involved in a conflict with one of his teachers over a legal issue.

The tactics. The administrator used the tactics of (a) information control and (b) rules and regulations.

Respondent #24

Age	55 years
Total experience	33 years
Present job experience	9 years
Experience	7 years

The scenario. The Director in this episode was involved with a teacher. The teacher was hired to teach in two schools in a community. Shortly after school commenced in the new school year, the teacher informed the principal that she did not wish to teach in one of the schools any longer. The principal informed the Director of the development. The administrator requested a special division board meeting about the matter and next morning went to speak to the teacher. The teacher, for no apparent reason, adamantly refused to teach in the one school. After a very brief conflict, the Director fired the teacher.

The tactics. This administrator used the one tactic of imposing rules and regulations. Prior to the hiring of the teacher the Director had made it clear to the teacher that teaching in both schools was part of the job description. Because she refused to fulfill the obligation, the Director was legally empowered to terminate the contract, which he did.

Summary of Respondents

In total, 24 interviews were conducted with 24 different Superintendents or Directors of Education. From the profile data, the following information is apparent:

Mean age	42.9 years
Mean total experience	21.2 years
Mean present job experience	5.9 years
Mean training	6.3 years

No comparisons for Saskatchewan means for the entire population were available (See Appendix B: Letter from Mr. Dyck and telephone conversation with Mr. Sawchuk).

However, Table 4.1 indicates the tactics and their frequency. The last three, stall for time, naivete and environment control, are new tactics created from the data.

All 24 of the interviewees could and did identify specific tactics they employed during the conflict episodes they described to the interviewer. All of the respondents understood the dynamics of the various categories but did not necessarily use each of them in the described incident. In the balance of this chapter each of the categories, as it related to this study, is examined.

INFORMATION CONTROL

The most frequently used tactic was related in some way to the use, dissemination or manipulation of information. Controlling the quality, quantity and kind of information given was a tactic 14 of the 24 administrators

Table 4.1

Frequency of Tactics

Tactic	Evident in # of interviews/24
Information Control	14
Information Distorion	4
Information Channels	8
Rules and Regulations	12
Reward Control	1
Denigration	6
Coalition Formation	14
Coalition Destruction	4
Withdrawal	1
Appearing to Lose	0
Naivete	1
Environment Control	3
Stall for Time	6
Total	74

employed in the particular episode they described.

Information control appeared to be a powerful tactic used by the respondents but it was used in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. The tactics associated with the control of information could be grouped under three headings: over-abundance of information, withholding information and information offered in an explanatory fashion.

Information Overkill

Several of the respondents described tactics they had used whereby they simply distributed huge amounts of information to their opponents with the specific objective of swamping the arguments of the other antagonists. Some verbatim examples are given below.

Respondent 19 - with his principals' group over a school time scheduling issue:

> So I made an opening remark, I was told later by my assistant who sat in on the meeting with me, took just over forty minutes. Something related to overkill.

Respondent 2 - with his board over a programming issue:

> . . . giving the manuals to the trustees to read was effective in terms of the fact that they were responsible for reading the manuals and determining whether there was anything wrong with them from their own personal perspective; which as you know is an arduous task in itself.

Respondent 9 - with his board over a teacher evaluation issue:

> You know, long presentations and documents don't get read.

The aforementioned remarks came from different interviews and are indicative of the notion of oversupply of information. To bring closure to the conflict, the administrator disseminated information in large quantities, logically and rationally, and silenced any opposition.

Withholding Information

Another facet of information control was the withholding of information on the part of the respondents.

Information which would be damaging to the interviewee, or information which would weaken his case was, deliberately, not given in a number of instances. For example:

Respondent 2 - with his board over a programming issue:

> (a) One must withhold a certain amount of information; by not indicating the rationale one can put it off to political considerations.
>
> (b) I've been getting one or two of the items back but I know there are others . . . (by not telling the board) it's really up to the board now to go after me to drag them in.

Respondent 9 - with his board over a teacher evaluation issue:

> I attended a local board meeting and didn't try to tell them what to do but simply answered questions.

Respondent 19 - with his principals' group over a school time scheduling issue:

> (Q) Did you present all the information to the principals?
>
> No. Some of it didn't enhance my argument . . . I certainly chose the information I was going to use very carefully.

Given the opportunity, the administrators did not seem hesitant to withhold information which might prove detrimental to their cause.

Explanation Information

In many cases where information control was evident, administrators were merely explaining or giving their opponents a more rational approach to the conflict at hand. They were passively hoping that what they were doing would help to eliminate the disagreement or they were

intuitively assuming that logic would overcome dogma.

Examples were:

Respondent 19 - with his principals' group over a school time scheduling issue:

> In fact they did. So at that point we trotted out the information I had summarized for them.

In this case, the administrator was in conflict with his principals' group regarding scheduling and timetabling. In anticipation of a confrontation, the administrator had prepared a package of materials which included province-wide information. When the principals raised the matter in a meeting, the administrator "trotted out the information" in the hope that the issue would end at that point.

Respondent 9 - with his board over a teacher evaluation issue:

> (a) I had been trying to talk individually with trustees regarding class time and giving them information regarding the philosophy of instruction et cetera.
>
> (b) We had a fairly lengthy meeting . . . a lot of talking to try to sell them on the idea.
>
> (c) I tried to stay out of that group. In fact I didn't even meet with them. I tried to feed them with some information and ideas, but other than that I had little or no contact with them.
>
> (d) I tried to direct them in terms of my knowledge and experience with the division board as to how they could make inroads. And what kinds of danger to watch for particularly that they would be faced with a dumping or a jumping on by the division board chairman . . .
>
> (e) I sent a similar document to the principals and told them to be prepared to react.

Respondent 9 was caught between his board and his

principals' group regarding a teacher supervision issue, and in conflict with both parties. In order to end the conflict he merely gave clear, concise information in the hope that logic would prevail.

INFORMATION DISTORTION

In four of the interviews, deliberate distortion of information was evident as a tactic to close a conflict. The administrators knowingly distorted some facts to further their own ends. Some examples are given below.

Respondent 2 - with his board over programming issue:

> If you appear to indicate that your board is working from a narrow philosophical base then what you are doing is reducing the credibility of the board and thereby reducing your own credibility. Then there is the question of how factually do you report things that happened? Do you go around to each principal and tell them the board has been totally incorrect in its actions? No!

In the case of Respondent 2, the administrator was, in effect, defending his board by telling half-truths to his principals. He deliberately distorted information others were receiving to hasten the closure of the conflict.

Respondent 9 - with his board over teacher evaluation issue:

> In the meantime I had gotten other information to the division board . . . on the dangers of dropping administrative changes on the administration without covering of the philosophical bases. So I was trying to work both ends.

This is the episode where the administrator was caught between principals and board. Although the issue was teacher supervision, he deliberately gave the board distorted information regarding educational philosophy

rather than hard information which related to the issue.

Respondent 19 - with his principals' group over school time scheduling issue:

> I suppose had I gone through these things and found out that they did just the opposite I wouldn't have used them at all. Certainly an information bias. I created the percentages.

The administrator in this case, instead of presenting facts as they were, created percentages in order to distort or twist the information in such a way as to strengthen his own case.

In all of the aforementioned illustrations, distortion of information in some manner was evident as a tactic used by the administrators in the conflicts.

INFORMATION CHANNELS

Providing information to specific people, or selecting a particular vehicle for delivering information, was a third tactic used by administrators. Eight of the respondents referred directly to using some channels rather than others to end a conflict. Statements below exemplify channelling of information.

Respondent 9 - with his board over teacher evaluation issue:

> In the meantime I sent another document to the division board trustees and to the principals.

In the case of Respondent 9, the administrator was in a conflict with his board, as well as his principals' group, over a professional issue. In order to relieve the pressure from himself he chose to supply information to the

two groups. He chose to channel information to both groups rather than to one or another of them. Thus he would at least reduce the conflict in which he was involved.

Respondent 4 - with a principal over incompetence charge:

> I had to get to the local board meetings because they were turning things around, even at those meetings, against the board office and even me.

This Respondent found it necessary to attend local board meetings so that he could provide to the trustees the kind of information he wished to provide. The individuals whom he was in conflict with, also attended the meetings. He was, thereby, controlling how the trustees got their information; closing off one source but opening another.

Respondent 22 - with community member over philosophical differences:

> She was acting as an information pipeline to him until I stomped all over her. You know, and closed that door for him.

The Respondent 22 statement was in reference to a conflict which the administrator had with a member of the community at large. He found that his opponent was getting information from a teacher and he decided that he must shut off that information source.

All three are examples of how the administrators in this study attempted to choose or eliminate channels of information dissemination.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Those interviewed for this study often used the

imposition of official rules, regulations, policy or law to further their own interests. Twelve respondents used the tactic. For example:

Respondent 1 - with teacher over termination:

> And so, in my summation, I made it pretty clear I would not tolerate these three or four things.

In this example, the administrator was engaged in a conflict with one of his teachers over the refusal of the teacher to follow a supervision schedule. The administrator, in that conflict, used the legislated power of the province vested in him to make sure the teacher complied. The "three or four things" referred to were connected with the orderly operating of the school.

Respondent 4 - with principal over incompetence charge:

> I started to formulate a different strategy. I called both of them in and just let it all hang out and just said in effect I'm through supporting either one of you. We are going to choose up sides now and if I can get you I'm going after you.

In the case of this Respondent, the administrator was falling back on his official authority as Director of Education to achieve his end. He made it clear to the other combatants that he, through the legal power of the board, could, if circumstances permitted, fire them.

Respondent 5 - with his board over teacher termination:

> They finally came up with the question. Why is he the one and not somebody else? So my response to that was because he is the least capable teacher on staff. I said that publicly.

The Respondent 5 comment was made in explanation of the releasing of a teacher from his contract. The

administrator has the legal responsibility to evaluate staff and in the ensuing conflict over the release, he used that power when he publicly stated that the teacher was "the least capable teacher on staff."

The use, or imposition, of official rules, regulations, policies and statutes was a tactic employed by the respondents. Several of those interviewed included comments such as "a pure power play" or "moral victory" as part of the conversations when rules and regulations were used. In other words, the administrators had the rules and regulations on their side and they used them.

REWARD CONTROL

The control of rewards was clearly evident in only one of the conflict episodes. It would seem that the nature of the groups involved in education, and the nature of their jobs, did not allow the administrators to use reward control, in the form of promotions, salary increases and the like, to any great extent.

In fact, only one respondent made direct reference to controlling rewards.

Respondent 19 - with principals' group over school time scheduling issue:

> That first year, for instance, we started a principals' retreat that we have each year. We take our principals out of the schools and go to a cabin at a lake and we do some in-depth in-service for a day and a half. Then we have a day and a half of golfing, fishing, drinking and bridge. It's been a real good thing.

In this episode the administrator implied that the

previously granted reward of the retreat could be easily taken back. He further stated that after his discussion regarding the three day retreat that:

> . . . there were some downcast eyes and some head nodding and a lot of people looking uncomfortable.

The administrator had successfully used the tactic of reward control to further his own cause in the conflict.

DENIGRATION

Denigration was used by six of the interviewed administrators. Some examples are given below.

Respondent 12 - with teacher over termination:

> So I said to him, don't give me that crap; put it in writing.

In the Respondent 12 episode, the administrator was faced with a teacher who, although tenured, was incompetent. The principal of the school where the teacher was placed had made several requests to the administrator to have something done about the teacher. Although the administrator said during the interview that he knew he was incompetent ("he was one of those . . . I could smell him as far as I could see him.") he was loathe to do anything about the teacher for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the teacher's power position in the community. When the principal again spoke to the administrator regarding the teacher, the statement in Respondent 12 was made by the administrator to the principal. A letter from the principal to the administrator about the teacher was forthcoming and

the administrator then acted on the matter.

Respondent 4 - with principal over incompetence charges:

> At one stage during the interview I called him one of the most ineffective administrators that I had ever encountered. And he said well, that's the first time I've ever heard that. I said well you just don't go around saying that . . . I tried to tie you in in more kind ways along the way. I reminded him of some of these.

In this case, the administrator had long been plagued by trustees, teachers and community members about a principal. After receiving strong support from a trustee he finally decided to have a confrontation meeting with the principal. This statement by the Respondent was part of that meeting.

Respondent 5 - with board over teacher termination:

> So I said, the people who know where it's at know that the original decision was the right one; but the way they operate in that community--and that's part of my objective to turn that around--is not a right thing to do.

This Respondent example involved a teacher dismissal motion and its rescinding at a subsequent meeting by a member of the board of trustees. During the ensuing conflict with the board, the statement was made by the administrator.

Denigration, or putting down the opposition, was a tactic employed by the respondents in this study.

COALITION FORMATION

As discussed in Chapter 3, there seemed to be two facets to the concept of coalition as it was evident in this

study: building coalitions, and tearing down coalitions of the opposition. In all, there were 18 examples of either coalition formation or destruction.

Coalition Building

Some examples of coalition building are given below.

Respondent 4 - with principal over incompetence charge:

> I found that in that situation a trio is a pretty ineffective group. I mean they could gang up on me and I'd had it. So at this particular meeting I had my assistant in as a sort of a listener. He could ask questions or add to it. Or I would ask--Have I misinterpreted the feeling of the board?--and that helped a great deal because I was no longer one on two but rather two on two.

This example is self-explanatory. The administrator realized the strength in numbers notion and asked his assistant to attend the meeting in order to equal the numbers in the conflict.

Respondent 10 - with board over policies and procedures:

> I became concerned enough about it, and perhaps a bit depressed, so that one day I went down and had a coffee with the vice-chairman. I made the point that it was just a little bit rough but I think we'll work it out. He indicated that we kind of recognize that and hope it does work out.

In the case of Respondent 10, the episode was more enigmatic. The administrator, after having some trouble with some of his board over a professional issue, felt he had to discover whether or not he had any support on the board. The coffee meeting was an overt attempt to gain an ally as well as to discover the degree of board support.

Respondent 1 - with teacher over termination:

> After the incident, we spent a lot of time with the staff. I didn't so much but the principal did. We just said, Look, I'm sorry but that's the way it is.

On the other hand, the Respondent 1 statement was made in conjunction with a teacher firing. The initial conflict over the dismissal had not yet died down and, therefore, the administrator felt it necessary to gain support for his actions from the staff in order to see the first conflict completely closed.

Coalition Destruction

As mentioned earlier, the opposite of building coalitions was also evident in the data. Some examples of coalition destruction follow.

Respondent 22 - with community member over philosophical differences:

> I think it was a matter of accepting him for what he was and then diligently try to prove to the people that he was . . . hey . . . t'ain't so, you know.

In this episode, the administrator was in conflict with a community member who was extremely critical of the educational system. In the interview the respondent said that it was important to him to find out where community support lay for the opposition and then to go out, and through a variety of means including newspaper columns, attempt to nullify any support the other antagonist had garnered. The same respondent said:

> That's probably the story of my conflict resolution. I was able to isolate the guy by working on

his cohort and showing her what was going on and involving her. I succeeded in isolating the guy totally on the board. In fact, got the local board to beat some sense into the man. Verbally of course. They literally beat some sense into him.

Initial support from the district board for the trustee was broken down by the administrator and the trustee suddenly found himself alone and the balance of the board was able to "beat some sense into him."

Respondent 12 - with a teacher over termination:

(a) Which removed her from the scene.

(b) Which left her standing alone out in the cold.

(c) I made sure I was going to separate her from everything that looked like support.

This episode dealt with a teacher termination. The administrator was able to destroy connections the teacher had through a number of community avenues and leave the teacher "removed, alone and separated" from her original support.

Although used only four times by the respondents, coalition destruction was evident in the data.

WITHDRAWAL

Three respondents in the samples withdrew, in some form, from the conflict in which they were involved. Each withdrawal was under different circumstances. They are dealt with below.

The first was a classic example of a win-lose conflict situation. A division board had issued a lawful

order in contravention of the principles held by the administrator and a conflict ensued. He said, "The board's reaction was an angry response to my presentation. Pure power. You withdraw and take your licking." The administrator lost and the board won.

The second was a power struggle between two groups in the community, one of which was related to a school. The administrator found himself in conflict with both groups. It became clear to him that he could not pursue the issue with either of the participants so he withdrew from the episode himself and asked the school board, which was familiar with the two parties, for help. The school board did and the administrator had no further involvement in the affair.

The third episode involved an administrator and two teacher groups within his organization which were at odds with one another over a professional matter. Over a period of several years the administrator found himself in conflict with the groups over the same issues and unable to satisfactorily reach any agreement. He finally withdrew from the whole matter and, in effect, allowed the two groups to resolve their differences. In fact, the administrator facilitated a series of conflict situations which would hasten the declaration of a winner.

Therefore, it would seem that only the last mentioned incident could, with any certainty, be said to be an example of withdrawal as a tactic to hasten closure of a

conflict. Clearly, the first two are not tactics. The third could be viewed as some sort of a confrontation or forcing tactic. It was apparent to the researcher that the third respondent was disgusted with the bickering of the two groups and merely wanted one of the groups to win so that he might proceed with more important matters.

In any case, withdrawal as a tactic did not emerge clearly from the data in this study but is included as a tally of one in the data for withdrawal.

APPEAR TO LOSE

The tactic of deliberately leading the opponent to believe he had won and the respondent had lost was not evident in the data. Although several of the respondents reported losing, or at least partially losing, in the conflict they described to the interviewer "losing" could not be construed as a tactic employed in bringing about closure of the conflict.

EXPRESSED NAIVETE

One new tactic developed from the data was that of naivete on the part of the administrator. One of the respondents used the tactic to a great extent to attain his programming ends. Examples are provided.

Respondent 17 - with board over implementation of a program:

(a) But anyway, they were very protective of me for the first two or three months.

(b) Well, I said (to the board) I know how I feel about the program but how do you feel about the program? What is your board policy?

(c) I feel that one of the reasons that program came about successfully was I was a rookie and the board put aside some of their little animosities that sometimes build up and maybe set politics aside too.

Clearly, then, the administrator used his naivete on the job to achieve the implementation of the program. Although the program was against board policy the administrator used his lack of knowledge about the jurisdiction in order to have the trustees set aside personal feelings and introduce the program.

ENVIRONMENT CONTROL

In at least three of the interviews a second new tactic emerged from the data; that being control of the physical environment, or the setting of the conflict. In each case a meeting of the participants was held in a place and at a time determined by the administrator. Further, the administrator could, to some extent, control such factors as meeting agenda, agenda items and seating at the meeting. Examples are:

Respondent 19 - with principals' group over scheduling matters:

I had the secretary-treasurer come in. I encouraged him to find some little thing that he wanted to talk to the principals about and that took the heat off me. I dealt with another one myself but they were really moot issues. And so we started with those. I wanted sort of complete control of the agenda.

In this case the respondent was in conflict with his

principals' group over a scheduling issue. The administrator controlled not only the time of the meeting described but the agenda and placement of items on the agenda. He felt that by controlling those environmental factors his cause would be furthered.

Respondent 9 - with local board over a professional matter:

> I made sure he sat right next to the chairman.

The examples in this illustration involved a meeting of parents with a local board. Although it was only one small facet of the conflict scenario, the meeting described by the respondent was important in the overall genesis of the episode. The administrator chose to seat the leader of the parent group next to the board chairman.

Respondent 14 - with two professional groups within the jurisdiction:

> I set up the meeting and made sure it was in the comfort of the board room.

The case of Respondent 14 was the episode where the administrator seemed tired of the bickering of two groups within his organization. He intimated that he chose the board room so as to guarantee his comfort at the meeting but not so for the two groups.

Control of the environment was a tactic which emerged from the data for this study.

STALL FOR TIME

The new category with the greatest frequency of

usage which was developed was the tactic of stalling for time and was displayed by six of the respondents.

Respondent 8 - with board over policies and procedures:

> . . . and simply let natural things develop and after awhile one realizes that there are certain ambiguities and ambivalences.

In this case, the administrator was in conflict with a superordinate. He felt he was morally, philosophically and educationally correct in his stance. Therefore he merely delayed any open hostilities hoping his adversary would be convinced by the appearances of the "ambiguities and ambivalences." However, the administrator was prepared to take a strong stand if required to do so.

Respondent 20 - with principal over a professional matter:

> (a) I have usually been able to buy some time.
>
> (b) I'll sit on it for awhile.
>
> (c) Sometimes you hope the damned thing will go away, so you let it rest.

The Respondent 20 examples came from a respondent who refused to be electronically recorded and who asked the researcher not to take notes during the interview. Thus, the writer was unable to keep all tactic categories in mind while proceeding with the interview. One of the first comments the administrator made was in connection with "buying time." The three examples given were noted immediately after the interview, the administrator acknowledged his use of stalling as a tactic in the conflict.

Respondent 22 - with board over a philosophical matter:

> It takes time for them to have confidence in who I am. After time, the situation won't exist any more.

In the case of Respondent 22, the administrator described a conflict over role with his employing board. Rather than take issue with the board each time the matter arose, the administrator allowed the board more time to consider its attitude toward the role of chief executive officer.

Stalling for time was a tactic employed by some of the administrators in this study.

SUB-PROBLEMS

Thus far, eleven tactics have been identified in the data and specific examples given. In the balance of this chapter these tactics are examined in a more general way with a view to answering the sub-problems posed in Chapter 1.

Sub-problem 1: Nature of the Conflict Episodes

The 24 episodes described to the researcher could have been grouped in a number of ways. However, for the purposes of this study they were grouped according to the person or group with whom the administrator was in conflict. Table 4.2 shows the party with whom the conflict occurred as well as the issue which precipitated the conflict.

Of the five conflicts with teachers, three were with teachers who were, or were about to be, terminated. In all

Table 4.2

Conflicts by Parties Involved and by Issue

Administrator	Other	Issue
1	1	Teacher Termination
2	2	Programming
3	2	School Closure
4	3	Principal Incompetence
5	2	Teacher Termination
6	3	Placement
7	2	Policies, Procedures
8	2	Policy Formation
9	2	Teacher Evaluation
10	2	Board Procedure
11	3	Teacher Evaluation
12	1	Teacher Termination
13	4	Interest Group Agreement
14	4	Placement
15	5	Salary, Benefits
16	1	Placement
17	2	Programming
18	3	Programming
19	3	Time Scheduling
20	3	Seminar Attendance
21	2	Role Perception
22	6	Philosophical Differences
23	1	Teacher Legality
24	1	Teacher Termination

	f
1 = Teacher	5
2 = Board	9
3 = Principal	6
4 = Organizations	2
5 = Peer	1
6 = Community Member	1

three of the cases the teacher's competence was in question and the administrator found himself in the conflict because of some aspect of his supervisory position. In the case of Respondent 16 a teacher disagreed with the appointment of an individual to an administrative position and became vociferous about the placement to the point where the administrator felt he had to intervene. The conflict took place at the intervention. The Respondent 23 instance involved a conflict between the administrator and a teacher whose moral conduct was in question. The administrator took it upon himself to confront the teacher and a conflict between the two resulted.

Conflicts with the board accounted for nine of the episodes. Six (Respondents 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 17) of those were conflicts where an action, or an intended action, of the board was in conflict with the philosophical or educational principles held by the administrator. That is, the politics of the school board were not in agreement with the educational ideals of the administrator and a conflict resulted. The Respondent 3 episode involved the administrator recommending the closure of a school and the board disagreeing. In the case of Respondent 10 the new administrator indicated to the board that a procedure they had employed before his coming was inappropriate and not technically legal and he requested that the board change the procedure. A serious disagreement resulted. The ninth (Respondent 21) episode was a subtle ongoing conflict

between administrator and board regarding the role of each. The conflict was far from being resolved at the time of the interview and was manifested in quiet but clear ways by each party.

Six of the conflict episodes were with school principals. The Respondent 4 example had to do with apparent incompetence of the principal. In the Respondent 6 case the administrator was in conflict with the school vice-principal regarding an administrative appointment in the jurisdiction. Respondent 11 was in conflict with a principal over the evaluation of a teacher. In the Respondent 18 example, the administrator found himself in conflict with his principal because of a previous principal-community confrontation. For Respondents 19 and 20 the conflicts were based on professional issues.

Two of the episodes had the administrator in conflict with other organizations. In Respondent 13 the two groups were the Department of Education and the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. The administrator in that instance was in conflict with the two groups as to the kind of direction they were giving his board. In the other case, Respondent 14 was in conflict with two groups within his organization.

Sub-problem 2: Tactics and Frequency

Earlier in this chapter, the tactics were identified and discussed at length. In Table 4.3 the

Table 4.3

Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Tactics Employed by Administrators

Tactic	Frequency	% of Total
Information Control	14	18.9
Coalition Formation	14	18.9
Rules and Regulations	12	16.2
Information Channels	8	10.8
Denigration	6	8.1
Stall for Time	6	8.1
Information Distortion	4	5.4
Coalition Destruction	4	5.4
Environment Control	3	4.1
Withdrawal	1	1.4
Reward Control	1	1.4
Naivete	1	1.4
Appear to Lose	0	0.0
Total	74	100

tactics are arranged according to frequency of use in the incidents reported in the interviews. That is, no attempt was made to count each tactic in each interview. However, if the tactic was used even once by a respondent it appears in the table.

Control of information, formation of coalitions and

imposition or use of rules and regulations were the most frequently used tactics. Withdrawal, control of rewards and naivete were the least frequently used.

Sub-problem 3: Tactics Typical of Kind of Conflict

As indicated previously, the conflicts were classified by individuals or groups who participated in the episode.

Table 4.4 gives information related to the tactics employed with each group. Only the first four (teachers, boards, principals and other organizations) are given and therefore totals in Table 4.4 don't correspond with totals in Table 4.3. The last two (peers and community member) had only one in each group and, therefore, comparisons are not possible.

Tactics are represented in Table 4.4 as follows:

a = Information Control
b = Information Distortion
c = Information Channels
d = Rules and Regulations
e = Reward Control
f = Denigration
g = Coalition Formation
h = Withdrawal
i = Appear to Lose
j = Coalition Destruction
k = Stall for Time
l = Naivete
m = Environment Control

Those respondents who reported a conflict with teachers all used rules and regulations as a tactic. Three used coalition formation and two used information control.

The administrators who reported conflicts with

Table 4.4

Tactics Employed by Administrator and Other Participant

Other Participant	Respondent	Tactic Employed
Teachers (5)	1	a d g
	12	c d f g k
	16	d g j
	23	a d
	24	d
Board (9)	2	a b c f g
	3	d
	5	d f
	7	g m
	8	a g j k
	9	a b c d
	10	g k
	17	l
	21	g j k
Principals (6)	4	a c d f g
	6	a c d f
	11	a d g
	18	a b c
	19	a b e g k m
	20	k
Groups (2)	13	a c g
	14	a h m
Total		12 4 7 11 1 5 12 1 0 3 6 1 3 = 66

boards, used coalition formation five times. In three of the cases they used stalling for time as a tactic. In another three they employed the imposition of rules and regulations.

In the case of the six situations where the administrators were in conflict with principals, five of them used information control as a tactic. Three of them used rules and regulations, three used information channels and another three used coalition formation.

The two respondents who reported conflicts with other groups used information control as a tactic, while one used information channels and coalition formation, and the other used withdrawal and naivete as a tactic.

Sub-problem 4: Usefulness of Tactics

It was not possible for the researcher to devise any measure of usefulness insofar as the tactics employed by the respondents were concerned. Each of the identified tactics was, to a certain extent at least, successful in achieving closure of the described episodes when the tactics were employed. However, a tactic used successfully by one administrator was not necessarily used by another and vice versa. The data were manipulated in a number of ways (win, lose, kind of conflict, frequency of tactic) but no clear pattern emerged.

As well, the respondents were asked if they found one tactic to be more useful than another. However, none of the administrators would definitely state that a tactic

was particularly useful in any given situation. Some of the respondents indicated that they had "favorite" tactics, or tactics they used more often than others, but none said that specific tactics were more useful than others.

Ancillary Sub-problem: Usefulness of the Research Technique

As indicated in Chapter 1, Flanagan's Critical Incident Research Technique has been used infrequently in educational administration research. One facet of this study was to attempt to determine the usefulness of the procedure as it applies to an educational organization.

As the data were gathered for this study, it became more and more apparent to the researcher that the need for absolute anonymity was essential. The episodes which the administrators freely and openly discussed with the writer were highly sensitive. All respondents were cautioned not to use names or places in their anecdotes, but 18 of the taped interviews contained references to people as well as to towns and/or schools. Only one of the administrators was at all reluctant to talk in detail about all aspects of the critical incident he described.

Each of the respondents seemed anxious to relate the details of the episode to the researcher. Several indicated that they had never talked to anybody about the incident prior to the interview. All but the one reluctant administrator were relaxed in deportment and none put a time limit on the interview. Some volunteered to supply the

researcher with additional anecdotes to supplement the original. As well, all of the respondents acknowledged the existence, as well as the use, of some of the tactics.

Furthermore, many of the quotes found in this text had to be disguised (changing gender and numbers, deleting personal pronouns and names, deleting times). Two of the episodes could be addressed only in a general and peripheral fashion because any direct reference to the episode would lead to immediate identification by those familiar with it.

As well, time did not seem to be a factor regarding the detail given in the episode. Some respondents discussed their most recent conflict, while one described a conflict which happened at least fifteen years ago with seemingly equal clarity. Personal involvement and commitment seemed the criteria rather than time.

Time as a Factor

Although time did not seem to be important insofar as detail in the episodes was concerned, it emerged as an important variable when examining the length of time each episode lasted. Figure 4.1 gives the approximate duration of the individual confrontations from when the first discrepancy between the two parties was noticed until the incident was closed.

When the conflict was between administrator and teacher the time span was very short. The longest (Respondent 12) was approximately one month. Three (Respondents 1, 23, 24) took only one day.

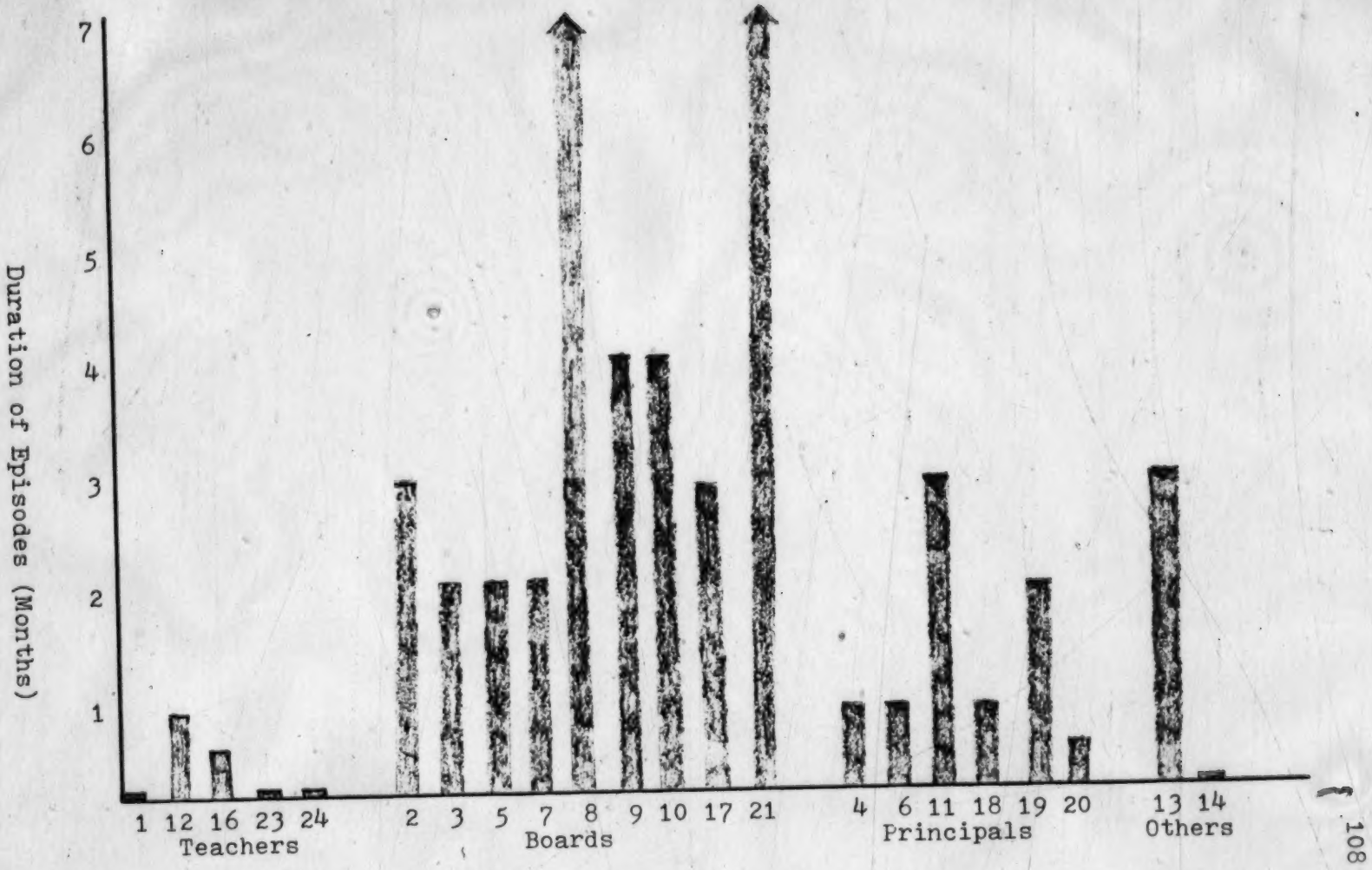


Figure 4.1 Duration of Episode by Respondent

However, when in conflict with boards, the conflicts dragged on for a much longer period of time. One (Respondent 2) was a quiet on-going role conflict with his board which, at the time of data collection in early 1981, had been taking place for three years. Another (Respondent 8) lasted nine months. Two (Respondents 9 and 10) took four months, two (Respondents 2 and 17) took three months and three (Respondents 3, 5, 7) lasted about two months.

On the other hand, the conflicts between administrators and principals were longer than those with teachers but shorter than those with boards. The longest (Respondent 11) lasted approximately three months, while the shortest (Respondent 20) took one week. Another (Respondent 19) took two months while two (Respondents 4, 6) lasted one month and one (Respondent 18) was two weeks in duration.

The conflicts with the two groups were entirely different when considering time. One (Respondent 13) lasted three months, while the other (Respondent 14) lasted only one day.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the data collected for this study were related directly to the major and sub-problems posed. It was shown that a distinct list of tactics employed by educational administrators when engaged in a conflict could

be identified. The complete list of tactics identified was:

1. Information Control
2. Information Distortion
3. Information Channels
4. Rules and Regulations
5. Reward Control
6. Denigration
7. Coalition Formation
8. Coalition Destruction
9. Withdrawal
10. Stalling for Time
11. Naivete
12. Environment Control

A thirteenth tactic, that of appearing to lose, was not evident in these data.

As well, the data were found to indicate that some tactics were used more frequently than others, and some tactics appear to be used in certain kinds of conflict. However, no tactic was deemed to be more useful than any other tactic by the respondents. Also, the time frame of each episode was examined and it was found that the teacher related conflicts were of shortest duration while those with school boards took longest with the principal related episodes in between the two.

Chapter 5

CONFLICT LITERATURE vs STUDY DATA

The previous chapter was devoted to presenting the data as they related to the major problem and the sub-problems presented in Chapter 1. In this chapter of the study, relationships between some important concepts drawn from conflict literature and the data generated from this investigation are examined.

Causes of Conflict

Different writers attribute organizational conflict to different causes. A re-examination of Table 4.2 (page 99, Conflicts by Parties Involved and by Issue) is appropriate at this time in order to relate the study data to the literature reviewed regarding causes of conflict. Although it would be difficult to state definitively that each conflict episode was the result of a single cause outlined in the literature, it is possible to place at least one episode in each of the causes given in the literature review.

Roethlisberger (1959:127) stated that conflict was rooted in the collision between "management practices" and "the sentiments of the employees." The organizational procedures are not congruent with the feelings of the employees. In the Respondent 1 episode, the issue was

related to the termination of a teacher. The episode was precipitated by the teacher failing to follow accepted procedures within the school supervision policy because the teacher felt no professional responsibility in the matter. The administrator, to facilitate the smooth functioning of the school, took issue with the stand taken by the teacher. A conflict ensued and ended with the contract of the teacher being terminated. Supervision practices and employee sentiments were at odds in this instance.

Ruben's faulty communication concept was evident in at least two of the episodes (Respondents 6 and 16). In both instances, the placement of administrative staff was the issue. The administrator did not communicate the reasons nor the rationale for the placements to his subordinates, and a conflict resulted.

Another cause of conflict, outlined by Assael (1969:573), related to "functional interdependence and the scarcity of resources." When people within an organization are dependent upon one another, yet must compete for resources, conflict will result. Administrator 2 was in conflict with his board over a program issue. The protagonists were partners in the organization, both seeking the same goals, yet fiercely competing for the same resources to see different programs introduced. This is a clear example of Assael's notion.

Pondy (1969:500) generalized that organizational conflicts could be attributed to jurisdictional boundary

ambiguity, a perceived increase in departmental friction, departmental dependence or physical obstacles to communication. The incident described by Respondent 14 could be construed as exemplifying Pondy's notion. The administrator was in conflict with two groups within his organization who were having yearly differences over teacher placement and transfers. No individual or group was sure what procedures were to be followed or had been followed; each group thought the other was held in higher esteem by the administrator; and each group thought its communication attempts were being blocked by the other.

Corwin (1976) pointed to five causes of conflict in educational organizations. They were structural differentiation, participation in decision-making, regulating procedures, heterogeneity and stability and interpersonal structure. Episode 14 could be interpreted as being caused by the degree of differentiation, staff specialization or the number of levels of authority. Regulating procedures, or organizational control, was the cause in incident 3 where a school closure was an issue. Interpersonal structure, or frequent informal interaction among staff members, caused episode 23. However, neither participation in decision-making nor heterogeneity and stability could be established as causes of any conflict incidents in this study.

In sum, it would seem that the causes of the conflict episodes studied for this investigation supported

the causes as outlined by the authors of the literature reviewed.

Types of Conflict

In order to explore the nature of the conflicts described in the interviews, the researcher manipulated the data in a number of ways in an attempt to fulfill the requirements of Sub-problem 1 (Description of the Nature of the Conflicts). The types of conflicts described by Likert and Likert (1976:8), Coser (1956:49), Pondy (1967: 297) and Beck and Betz (1975:59-74), as well as three groupings proposed by the writer and his colleagues, were all explored. Table 5.1 shows the results of those groupings for each of the proposals.

The categorization of conflict was used by Likert and Likert was substantive (conflict which was job related) and affective (conflict which was emotionally, or interpersonally, related). The episodes described to the researcher in this study could all be classified as either substantive or affective. Twenty were labelled substantive, four were called affective.

Coser also identified two kinds of conflict; realistic (those which arise from frustration) and nonrealistic (those which were an end in themselves). The information for this document could be classified as realistic or nonrealistic in that 22 were a result of frustration and two were a result of the "lust to fight."

Table 5.1

Types of Conflict and Frequency

Proponent	Types					
Likert & Likert	Substantive (20)	Affective (4)				
Coser	Realistic (22)	Non-realistic (2)				
Beck & Betz	Intra-stratum (11)	Inter-stratum (13)				
Other Party	Teacher (5)	Board (9)	Principal (6)	Other Groups (2)	Peer (1)	Community (1)

Further, Pondy's three models of conflict were examined in light of the study data. The bargaining model (to deal with interest groups within and without the organization) was found 13 times. The bureaucratic model (disagreements along the vertical dimension of the organization) was found nine times. The systems model (disagreements along the lateral dimension of the hierarchy) could be identified in two instances.

Finally, the intra-stratum conflict (between groups of equal power) and the inter stratum conflict (between groups of unequal power) notion of Beck and Betz was applied to these data. It was found that 11 of the episodes were between combatants of approximately equal power and 13 of them were between antagonists where the power bases were clearly not equal.

Dysfunctions of Conflict

As was noted earlier (pages 15-16), goal displacement is viewed by many to be the prime dysfunction of organizational conflict. That notion could not be supported by the data for this study. Perhaps the method of data collection precluded any discussion by the respondents of negative impact the conflict might have had on the organization and its goals.

However, one dysfunction indicated by the respondents is noteworthy. In at least two of the interviews, the respondents indicated that because of the

conflict, communication problems within their organizations had resulted. That fact would support the Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:463) idea that conflict can lead to duplication of effort and poor coordination.

As well, some of the episodes which were related to the writer were recent. No judgments could be made as to dysfunction aspects of those particular conflicts. Some dysfunction could result at a future date because of the incidents described. Nevertheless, little of the data used in this investigation indicated adverse effects of the conflict which had taken place.

Functions of Conflict

Reordering of priorities and resources is acknowledged as a worthwhile consequence of conflict. After demoting a principal one of the administrators said, "(the principal) is happier than he's ever been . . . he was out of his depth." Another said, "In fact the issue has never come up again. It has never surfaced again."

In the first instance, the principal apparently was not suited for his position. His inventory of personal resources was not in accord with the demands of the job. Therefore, the conflict resulted in a reordering of the human resources of the school. In the second case, the fact that the issue did not again receive attention would attest to the fact that it was too high as a priority. In both cases the conflict served as a vehicle to reorganize the

priorities and resources of the school division.

As well, at least two of the administrators, given below, used the conflict as a tool for some other purpose.

Respondent 5 - with his board over a teacher termination:

> I thought in my own mind I would be losing more than I would be gaining because I needed their support on some other issues. It was a bit of a trade-off, let's put it that way.
>
> (Q) In terms of some future decisions?
>
> That's right, yes. So in a sense I made it a little bit easier for them. Much more so than I would have liked or intended to.

Respondent 4 - with principal over incompetence charge:

> I said to the board I want six months of silence about that school if I can deliver the resignation. Of course I knew I could deliver it.

In both cases the administrator used the conflict for purposes which had nothing whatsoever to do with the circumstances of the disagreement. The conflict was used for other organizational gains.

In the same vein, another administrator used a conflict to establish his credibility and professional expertise with his principals' group.

Respondent 19 - with principals' group over teacher evaluation:

> I saw it as a fairly critical situation. I thought if anything else, this was the one I needed to win. And the definition of win there might be pretty tough to come up with. But to win on the basis of some legitimate arguments and not on the basis of pulling rank. Pulling rank wasn't good enough at this point.

The administrator was new to the position and, although the critical situation was not of his making, almost

seemed to seize the opportunity to establish his credibility. He could have ignored the issue, or retreated from the issue, but he chose instead that ". . . the approach that he was going to be taking was the confrontation approach." Thus, his end was served and the conflict that ensued was, in the opinion of the administrator at least, beneficial.

Data on Table 5.2 indicate that 14 of the 24 episodes showed clear evidence of some functional aspect to the conflict. Two of the Respondents (6 and 7) displayed some dysfunctional characteristics coupled with the functional. Two of the conflicts were organizationally dysfunctional. In eight of the cases, no evidence of either positive or negative outcomes was apparent in the data.

In the 10 instances where the episode was either dysfunctional, or there was no evidence of positive or negative outcomes, five were conflicts with trustees, two were with teachers and one each with principals, other organizations and peers.

Although there was clear evidence that some of the incidents were beneficial to the organization or the individuals or both, not every described episode showed a functional aspect to the conflict. The data support the notion that at least some conflict can be described as being organizationally functional.

Table 5.2

Administrator's Perception of Functional-Dysfunctional Aspects of Conflict Categorized by Party Involved in the Conflict

Respondent	Other	Functional	Not Evident	Dysfunctional
1	A	x		
2	B			x
3	B		x	
4	C	x		
5	B	x		
6	C	x		x
7	B	x		x
8	B		x	
9	B		x	
10	B	x		
11	C	x		
12	A	x		
13	D		x	
14	D	x		
15	E			x
16	A		x	
17	B	x		
18	C	x		
19	C	x		
20	C		x	
21	B		x	
22	F	x		
23	A		x	
24	A	x		
Total	24	14	8	4

A = Teacher
B = Board
C = Principal, Vice-principal
D = Organizations
E = Peer
F = Community Member

The information contained in Table 5.3 is a combination of the data found in Table 4.2 (p. 99 Conflicts by Parties Involved and by Issue) and that in Table 5.2. It shows that there were no dysfunctional aspects noted by the administrators to the conflict with teachers, organizations or community members. On the other hand, there were functional purposes served in all of the other categories with the exception of the "peer" episode.

Furthermore, in five of the six conflicts where the principal was the other party, there was evidence of functional outcomes. In the sixth episode, no functional or dysfunctional result could be found, while one showed both functional and dysfunctional characteristics. When teachers

Table 5.3

Functional-Dysfunctional Aspects of Episodes by Parties Involved

Parties in Conflict with Administrator	#	Functional	Not Evident	Dysfunctional
Teachers	5	3	2	0
Board	9	4	4	2
Principal	6	5	1	1
Organizations	2	1	1	0
Peer	1	0	0	1
Community Member	1	1	0	0
Total	24	14	8	4

were the other party, three conflicts had functional aspects and two showed no clear evidence one way or the other. Finally, when the administrators were in conflict with boards, four epidodes had clear functional outcomes while four were neither functional nor dysfunctional and one displayed both functional and dysfunctional aspects.

Conflict Management

The data collected for this investigation revealed little evidence that the administrators attempted to "manage" the conflict in any sense of the word. Some "used" the conflict for another end, or "shaped" an episode in their own fashion, but to say that any one of the respondents managed the conflict would, in this study, be incorrect.

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975:464-466) outlined three approaches to conflict management. They were process consultation (a third party), laboratory exercises (understanding other's perception) and structural changes (re-organization). In none of the 24 episodes were any of these three methods employed. Although some did call in a third party, it was for the purpose of forming a coalition. Some attempted to change the organizational structure, but it was for future gains, not for conflict management.

Also, the administrators were not concerned with the dysfunctional aspects of the win-lose approach to conflict. The literature clearly indicates that the win-lose situation should be avoided; however the respondents in this study were either unaware of the notion or totally

unconcerned with the consequences of such an approach.

The Pondy Model

Pondy's model (1967), discussed earlier in this document (pages 22-25) suggested that conflicts originate with other conflicts, they are dynamic, the process is gradual, conflicts end in aggression if left unchecked, and conflicts may be affected by outside factors. The data for this study were examined in the light of Pondy's thesis.

The notion that conflict episodes are a result of the aftermath of previous conflicts was evident in 17 of the 24 conducted interviews. Some interview statements which support the assertion are given below.

Respondent 4 - with principal over incompetence charge:

> I tried to get this guy four or five years ago and got no support. None to speak of at the local level or at the sub-division level. I thought we had support but when we went to do something about it we got no support.

Respondent 1 - with teacher over termination:

> I felt unhappy, after the board had reprimanded this teacher three years ago, that the teacher was a negative influence.

Respondent 19 - with principals' group and board over teacher evaluation:

> Ah well. It's just another one of those things that the division board stands for. There's nothing we can do about it. We're screwed in the ear again and here we go.

In each of the cases, the conflict which resulted was a direct result of the aftermath of a previous conflict which had not been resolved to the satisfaction of the

participants. Pondy's aftermath notion is supported by these data.

Also, the 24 conflicts described to the researcher exemplified the contention that conflict episodes are dynamic and gradual. Each of the interviewees described an incident which grew rather than diminished, and each was in a time frame which could be described as extraordinary. In other words, none of the conflict episodes were spontaneous reactions to circumstances. The shortest episode described took approximately one day to run its course, while the longest took four or five years. Further, each ended in aggression. Pondy's notion of slow growing incidents culminating in aggression is supported.

Admittedly, no incident was described to the writer where a clear conflict was not evident. That is, the nature of the interview was such that an aggressive involvement of some kind was required. However, that does not detract from the Pondy model in that it could be argued that the outside forces (environment, strategic considerations) were at work and before the conflict grew to where aggression was the result, the disagreement was resolved.

Therefore, the data for this study suggests support for Pondy's notion of conflict. All of the conflict characteristics he described were clearly identified and isolated in the interview information. The episodes described to the researcher lend strength to Pondy's

conceptualization of the phenomenon of conflict.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, some relevant literature regarding types, dysfunctions and functions of conflict, conflict management and characteristics of a conflict model were examined as they related to the data gathered for this thesis. All of the aforementioned categories could, in some way, be related to the episodes described in the interviews. Some (types, functions and Pondy's model) were more easily related to the data than others (dysfunctions and conflict management). However, it would seem that the theoretical notions regarding conflict in organizations do relate to the more practical aspects of administration, and do relate to those who are engaged in educational administration at the senior level.

Chapter 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The previous two chapters have been devoted to analyzing the data gathered for this study. In this chapter some interpretations about the responses are made and some speculative comments are offered.

The Major Problem

In Chapter 4 a list of conflict resolution tactics employed by the 24 educational administrators who contributed data to this study was developed. There are a number of characteristics of that list which are noteworthy.

First, the major problem of this study included the basic question as to whether or not it was possible to establish a list of tactics used by administrators in conflict situations. Each of the 24 respondents readily agreed that indeed the "tactics" were employed. In fact, after the interviews were completed and the writer summarized the information given him insofar as this study was concerned, many of the respondents identified their own behaviours. As well, some indicated that although they had not used a particular tactic in the example described, they had used it previously and were willing to provide an example.

Second, as the interviews were conducted, it became more and more clear to the researcher that these tactics often intertwined and led slowly and gradually one into the other. For example, it was clear when an administrator began to control the information his antagonist was receiving, but it was not clear when he stopped controlling the information and when he began distorting it. At the outset of the episode the administrator openly agreed that he controlled the information. At the conclusion he admitted to distorting information. However, he could not say when he stopped controlling and started distorting. The same could be said of the episodes where two or more tactics were used.

Finally, when the list of tactics had been developed and examined, the seemingly "negative" connotations of all tactic categories were rather glaring. That is, most of the categories which emanated from the literature and the data can be viewed as manipulative or clandestine manoeuvres and are more in keeping with back-room meetings than with professional educators.

However, each of the episodes described to the researcher was a conflict situation where professionalism, livelihood or self-esteem was at stake. The decisions were tough and the risks considerable. The setting and the mood in each incident were adversarial and, therefore, not prone to platitudes or niceties. They were difficult situations which promoted winning as being good, and losing as being

bad.

Nature of Conflicts and Kinds of Tactics

As indicated on Table 4.4 (page 104) the data in this study showed that when the administrator was in conflict with a teacher he most often used rules and regulations as a tactic. When the other party in the conflict was the board, the administrators most frequently employed coalition formation and stalling for time. If the administrator was in conflict with a principal, he tended to control information.

In the case of administrator in conflict with a teacher the use or imposition of rules and regulations was considered to be a powerful tactic. In each of the five conflicts, the discipline or firing of the teacher was at the heart of the episode. Each of the incidents had subordinate-superordinate overtones. That is, the administrator had more formal, legal power in the educational organization than did the teacher, and the administrator used that power to bring the episode to a close. In each of the five instances the teacher was well aware of the powerbase of his opponent and little or nothing he did could alter the legitimate position of the administrator.

On the other hand, where the administrators were dealing with their superordinates, the boards, they used the seemingly more covert tactics of coalition formation and stalling for time. In other words, when the administrator

was faced with a stronger opponent he tended to seek sympathy to his cause as well as drag out the time limits. The relationship between boards in Saskatchewan and their chief executive officers might, in part at least, explain why the administrators tended to use the more subtle tactics. While directors of education in Saskatchewan are chief executive officers, the boards are their legal superiors. Most contracts between boards and directors are of one year's duration. Therefore, it would seem logical that directors, although they have a great deal of legal power insofar as boards are concerned, would rather use persuasion and time with their employers than legal power.

However, when dealing with their principals, the administrators most frequently used control of information as a tactic. The principals in any educational organization hold a position that is between office administration and the teachers in the schools. In many educational organizations they appear to behave as peers to the directors. It would seem that although rules and regulations was the second most frequently employed tactic, the administrators preferred to use the more gentle tactic of controlling the information they gave to the principals.

It is interesting to speculate why some tactics were not used. For example, the tactic of stalling for time was employed in only one instance (of five) when an administrator was in conflict with a teacher, twice (of six) with principals and three times (of nine) with boards.

Again, perhaps the superordinate-subordinate relationship between the administrators and the teachers precluded any reason to extend the time limits.

Also, the administrators did not use information distortion or information channels when dealing with teachers. Apparently they found no reason to be selective about who should get information or how it should be given. On the other hand, perhaps the administrators didn't give the teachers any information which would eliminate the necessity of selecting a channel or worrying about the clarity of the information.

Tactics and Frequency

Data on Table 4.3 (page 102) seem to indicate that, when using openness as the criterion, the 74 tactics used by the 24 interviewees fall into two broad categories. That is, one could label a tactic as being either overt or covert. Overt tactics include the imposition of rules and regulations, denigration and reward control. Information control, distortion and channels, stalling for time, coalition formation and destruction, withdrawal, naivete and environment control could be said to be covert tactics. The overt tactics accounted for 19 of the 74 tactics or 26 percent of the total. The balance were covert tactics. It would seem therefore that the respondents seemed much more hesitant to use the visible tactics of reward control, denigration and rules and regulations than the more subtle

tactics of naivete, environment control or information channels.

Further, the administrators used those tactics associated with information (control, distortion, channels) 26 times (35.1 percent) and when coalition tactics were considered, 18 of the total of 74 were found (24.3 percent). Those two types of tactics, that is tactics associated with directly attempting to manipulate or control communication and people, accounted for 45 of the 74 tactics (60.8 percent). Rather than attempt to dominate their opponents with legal power, the administrators far more frequently attempted to cajole or manipulate their opponents to their way, and thus end the conflict.

The new tactic of stalling for time (six out of 74 or 8.1 percent) suggests two things. Perhaps the administrators were unprepared, either emotionally or intellectually, for the conflict and they needed to buy some time. Several of the respondents alluded to this. Perhaps the administrators simply felt the "time wasn't right." Or perhaps those who used the tactic would indicate a degree of uncertainty regarding the problems facing them.

Finally, the total of 74 tactics identified in the sample of 24 shows that there were 3.1 tactics used per respondent. Table 4.4 (p. 104) indicates that one respondent (Respondent 19) employed six distinct tactics, four used five tactics, while three (Respondents 3, 17, 24) used one.

Tactics and Conflict Management

Considering the high level of experience (mean=21.2 years) and training (mean=6.3 years) of the respondents, they do not seem to have many conflict resolution skills. A number of explanations seem to be possible.

First, although Saskatchewan Superintendents and Directors of Education are, by law, required to have at least one year of post-graduate training, perhaps their university course work did not include coverage of the phenomenon of conflict. Or, if it did, the material on conflict management was not internalized by the administrators.

Second, the positions held by the respondents might demand a win-lose approach to conflict. The high profile which such an administrator must necessarily adopt within his jurisdiction simply does not allow for any other than a win-lose approach to conflict. They are expected to be "winners."

Finally, and most probably, the nature of the data required for this investigation might have precluded the respondents articulating anecdotes which were not of the win-lose variety. Perhaps, by bringing their conflict management skills into play, many other conflict episodes had been avoided and the one repeated to the researcher was an incident where the process had broken down and no other alternatives were available except for direct win-lose confrontation.

Important Tactics

The data on Table 4.1 (p. 79) underscore the importance of the dispersion and manipulation of information as well as the importance of friends and time in a conflict. That is, of the 74 entries on Table 4.1, 50 of them dealt directly with information, acquaintances or making more time.

Twenty-six of the tactics were related to handling information. The notion that information is power is enhanced by these data. The administrators recognized the potency of the control, use and dissemination of information when they were in a conflict.

Coalition formation and destruction and stalling for time were also seen as powerful tactics. Friends and time were important allies to be considered by those involved in conflict.

Tactics and Time

Although time considerations were not posed as important factors at the outset of this investigation, they did emerge as factors of import as the data were being analyzed. The conflicts lasted longest when the antagonists were administrator and boards, and shortest when they were administrator and teachers. The administrator and principals were between the two. There are a number of speculations possible.

First, the proposition can be made that the most often used tactics by the administrator when dealing with

each of the groups would logically determine the time constraints. When dealing with teachers the administrators, in every case, imposed rules and regulations to end the dispute; not a very time consuming activity. If the conflict was with boards, the administrators used coalition formation and stalling for time most frequently; both tactics requiring relatively more time. When the incidents were with principals, the administrators controlled information and imposed rules and regulations; again shorter periods of time would be necessary.

However, perhaps the opposite is true. Maybe the administrators chose their tactics according to the nature of the opposition. The subordinates, teachers and principals, did not demand a drawn-out conflict episode. The administrator, having the legal power, merely imposed rules and regulations to end the episode. In the same vein, maybe the administrators felt they had to proceed cautiously with their more powerful, superordinate school trustees. Further, the fact that three of the five incidents with teachers lasted only one day or less, would indicate a lack of concern for the aftermath of the conflict. Because a teacher termination was most often the issue in the administrator-teacher conflicts, little or no aftermath of the episode would result since the teacher would not be on staff in the future.

Usefulness

The sub-problem regarding usefulness of tactics was dealt with by the researcher in two ways. First, each respondent was asked if he found the tactics he had used to be useful in ending the conflict. Second, the researcher attempted to determine the usefulness of the tactics from the episodes considering the circumstances, the respondent and the outcomes of each conflict. There was no indication in either instance that the usefulness of a tactic could be determined. No measurement of usefulness was developed.

However, the notion of usefulness, or effectiveness, of the tactics is important to this study and should not be entirely abandoned. The data in Table 4.4 (p. 104) clearly show that besides favoured tactics used by the individual respondents, all the administrators used a specific tactic when dealing with a specific group. For example, the five administrators who were in conflict with teachers all used the imposition of rules and regulations. Also, five of six of the administrators in conflict with principals, used information control as a tactic. In those two groups of conflict episodes, the administrators displayed a clear preference for a specific tactic.

Also, the data in Table 5.3 (p. 121) show that most of the episodes (14 or 24) had some functional aspects to the outcomes; and few (4 of 24) had dysfunctional aspects. In eight of the conflicts there was no clear functional or dysfunctional evidence in the results of the conflicts.

Furthermore, in five of the six principal episodes, three of the five teacher episodes and four of the nine board episodes, there was clear evidence of some functional aspect to the conflict. On the other hand, in one of the six principal episodes, two of the nine board episodes and none of the five teacher episodes there was no evidence of dysfunctional characteristics of the conflict.

The data on Table 4.4 (p. 104) show that the tactics most often employed when dealing with principals, teachers and boards were information control, rules and regulations and coalition formation respectively.

Similarly, of the 74 identified tactics in Table 4.4, 26 were in the first three categories concerning information control, distortion or channels. Perhaps the tactics associated with information were viewed as being most effective or most useful by the administrators.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUMMARY

CONCLUSIONS

The task undertaken in this study was to identify and examine a list of tactics employed by senior educational administrators when they were involved in an organizational conflict. The data were gathered with the view to answering the following sub-problems:

1. What was the nature of the conflict episodes described by the administrators?

2. Were some tactics used by the administrators more frequently than others?

3. Were any particular tactics used by the administrators typical of a particular kind of conflict?

4. Could specific tactics employed be said to be more useful to administrators than other tactics in dealing with conflict?

The critical incident research technique was employed to collect the data and the data were analyzed.

The Major Problem

The data gathered gave clear evidence of a specific list of tactics which were used by the study respondents

when they were in job related conflict. Those tactics were:

1. information control
2. information distortion
3. information channels
4. rules and regulations
5. reward control
6. denigration
7. coalition formation
8. coalition destruction
9. stall for time
10. naivete
11. environment control; and
12. withdrawal.

The tactic of withdrawal appeared only once in the data and then its use as a tactic was somewhat in doubt. The proposed tactic of appearing to lose was not evident in any of the data.

Therefore, on the basis of the data collected within the parameters of this study, it is concluded that:

1. there are specific tactics which the administrators used to achieve closure to a conflict episode in which they were a participant; and

2. the administrators were cognizant of the tactics and their use. Although the respondents did not label the manoeuvres as being tactics, they were aware of doing specific things to hasten the end of the conflict.

Sub-problem 1 and 3: The Nature of the Conflicts and Particular Tactics

The data were analyzed in a number of ways. The most productive grouping was by the other actor involved in the conflict. Of the 24 interviews, 22 could be examined in a comparative way. Four groups of actors involved in conflicts with the administrators were found. They were (a) teachers, (b) boards, (c) principals, and (d) other groups.

The respondents, when in conflict with teachers, all used the tactic of imposing rules and regulations. Each of the episodes lasted a short time. The issue in the administrator-teacher conflicts most often was related to the competence of the teacher. The conflicts were addressed quickly by the administrator and he used his legal authority which was established in either statute or school board policy. The superordinate position of the administrator, supported by his legal right to be judgmental, allowed the Directors to be quick and decisive when dealing with teacher conflicts. Therefore, it is concluded that the administrator-teacher conflicts were related to the supervisory or evaluative role of the administrator.

In those episodes where the other party to the conflict was a school board, an entirely different pattern is evident. The respondents tended to use the two tactics of coalition formation and stalling for time. The time span of the episodes was comparatively long. The issue tended

to be one of principle, philosophy or approach to an important educational principle. The differences between the administrators and their boards seem to be related to the roles that each plays in the educational enterprise; trustees being politicians, directors being professionals. Furthermore, there are superordinate-subordinate overtones between the two groups, yet they must maintain a close and harmonious working relationship. Therefore, administrator-board conflicts must be resolved slowly and persuasively.

In the instances where the other participant to the conflict was a principal, the administrators tended to use the tactics of information control and the imposition of rules and regulations. The time lapse of the episodes varied, and no recurring issue was evident. There is no apparent relationship among tactics, time and issue. However, the use of information control and rules and regulations as tactics would suggest that when in conflict with principals, the administrators were more inclined to treat the situations like a teacher conflict rather than like a board conflict.

Finally, only two instances of administrator-other group conflicts were described. Therefore, no conclusions can be offered regarding those episodes.

Sub-problem 2: Frequency of Tactics

In the 24 interviews, there was definite evidence of the use of tactics on 74 different occasions. There was clear evidence of the use of 12 separate tactics. The six

most frequently used tactics were (a) information control (14 or 18.9%), (b) coalition formation (14 or 18.9%), (c) rules and regulations (12 or 16.2%), (d) information channels (8 or 10.8%), (e) stall for time (6 or 8.1%), and (f) denigration (6 or 8.1%). Those six accounted for most of the tactics used (60 or 81.1%).

Sub-problem 4: Usefulness of Tactics

Inasmuch as six of the tactics were used 81 percent of the time, the conclusion could be drawn that those six are the most useful. However, no measure of usefulness, other than frequency, could be devised and, therefore, no conclusion could be made regarding the usefulness of the individual tactics.

The Critical Incident Technique

The critical incident research technique, employed in this investigation, proved to be useful and powerful. It allowed the researcher to gain more information about each episode, insight which would not have been gained through the use of a different procedure. For example, some respondents gave detailed descriptions of their moods prior to and during the episode. Personal feelings become part of the data base. Also, extremely sensitive data were collected. Therefore, it is concluded that Flanagan's Critical Incident Research Technique is a useful data collection method which might be used more often by educational administrators.

IMPLICATIONS

The delimitation of the study to senior educational administrators leaves room for an extension of the study to the other party in the conflict. Louden's work (1980) showed clearly that the decision-making process is viewed differently by different levels within a hierarchy. It may be assumed that the other party to a conflict episode could add additional (important) information. As well, the question of the usefulness of the individual tactics could be addressed more easily if the individual who had experienced the tactic could respond. A study should be undertaken whereby both parties to the conflict were asked to describe the incident, what they did and how it affected the outcome. A comparison could then be made between the two sets of data and some conclusions reached regarding the usefulness of tactics.

Also, a follow-up study on all levels of educational administrators should be done with the express purpose of determining whether or not the tactics used are at all related to the position of the combatants. In other words, are the tactics used a function of the perceived power positions of the parties?

Further, a conflict management mode questionnaire could be administered to administrators and the results compared to a study such as this. Perhaps the method which the individual uses to deal with conflict is related

to who the other party is.

A questionnaire could be designed to further explore the question of tactics. This study has clearly indicated that these tactics are being used by administrators when facing conflicts. A questionnaire could yield more specific information as to the number, extent and use of tactics which people employ in a conflict.

Finally the findings could be useful in a number of ways. For example, experiences could be developed, possibly using the cases themselves, to sensitize administrators at different levels. The findings could then be used in workshops with teachers, administrators and trustees to make all participants more aware of problems and consequences associated with conflict.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Argyris, Chris
1957 Personality and Organization. New York: Harper and Row.

Assael, Henry
1969 "Constructive Role of Interorganizational Conflict." Administrative Science Quarterly, 14:573-582.

Baldridge, J. Victor
1971 Power and Conflict in the University. New York: John Wiley.

Barnard, Chester I.
1938 The Functions of the Executive. Cambridge: Harvard University Printing Office.

Beck, E. M. and Michael Betz
1975 "A Comparative Analysis of Organizational Conflict in Schools." Sociology of Education, 48,4:59-74.

Bernard, Jessie
1965 "Some Current Conceptualizations in the Field of Conflict." American Journal of Sociology, 70,5: 442-454.

Bethel, Charles A. and others
1978 "Conflict Resolution in High Schools: A Modest Proposal." NASSP Bulletin, 62:22-27.

Blake, Robert R. and Jane S. Mouton
1961 Group Dynamics - Key to Decision Making. Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company.

Blake, Robert R., Herbert A. Shepard and Jane S. Mouton
1964 Managing Intergroup Conflict in Industry. Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company.

Boltes, Paul B., Hayne W. Reese and John R. Nesselroade
1977 Life-Span Developmental Psychology: Introduction to Research Methods. Monterey, California: Brooks/ Cole Publishing Company.

Boulding, Kenneth E.
1977 "The Power of Nonconflict." The Journal of Social Issues, 33,1:22-23.

Browne, Eric C.
1973 Coalition Theories: A Logical and Empirical Critique. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications Inc.

Chasson, J. B.
1979 Research Design in Clinical Psychology. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Corwin, Ronald G.
1969 "Patterns of Organizational Conflict." Administrative Science Quarterly, 14:507-520.

Corwin, Ronald G. and Theodore C. Wagenaar
1976 "Boundary Interaction Between Service Organization and Their Publics: A Study of Parent-Teacher Relationships." Social Forces, 55,2:471-492.

Coser, Lewis A.
1956 The Functions of Social Conflict. New York: The Free Press.

Dunnette, Marvin D.
1966 Personnel Selection and Placement. Belmont, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Erlandson, David A.
1979 "Language, Experience and Administrator Preparation." Planning and Changing, 10,3:150-56.

Flanagan, John C.
1954 "The Critical Incident Technique." Psychological Bulletin, 51,4:327-358.

Fox, David J.
1969 The Research Process in Education. New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Frey, Diane and Joseph A. Young
1978 "Managing Conflict in Educational Settings." NASSP Bulletin, 62:18-21.

Frohock, Fred M.
1979 Public Policy Scope and Logic. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

George, Alexander L.
1959 In Ithiel De Sola Pool (ed.), Trends in Content Analysis. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 7-32.

Goennings, Sven and others (eds.)
1970 The Study of Coalition Behavior: Theoretical Perspectives and Cases from Four Continents. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Gottschalk, Louis A.
1979 The Content Analysis of Verbal Behavior. New York: Halsed Press.

Hall, Richard H.
1977 Organizations: Structure and Process. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Handy, Charles B.
1976 Understanding Organizations. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, Inc.

Housego, Ian
1971 "Education Policy Development: A politics of Insiders." In Ted Sawchuck and Gordon McIntosh (eds.), Revolution to Resolution: New Directions for the Seventies. Monograph: Barnnett House.

Hoy, Wayne K. and Cecil G. Miskel
1978 Educational Administration: Theory Research and Practice. New York: Random House.

Kelley, E. W.
1968 "Techniques of Studying Coalition Formation." Midwest Journal of Political Science, 12,2:62-84.

Likert, Renis and Jane Gibson Likert
1976 New Ways of Managing Conflict. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Louden, L. Warren
1980 "Administrative Decision Making in Schools." Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Alberta.

Lowenberg, Geula
1979 "Interindividual Consistencies in Determining Behavior-Based Dimensions of Teaching Effectiveness." Journal of Applied Psychology, 64,5:492-501.

Main, Allen P. and Albert E. Roark
1975 "A Consensus Method to Reduce Conflict." The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 53:754-759.

March, James G.
1974 "Analytical Skills and the University Training of Educational Administrators." Journal of Educational Administration, 12:18-34

Pace, Wayne R. and Robert R. Boren
1973 The Human Transaction. Glenview Illinois: Scott Foresman.

Parsons, Talcott
1954 Essays in Sociological Theory (revised). New York: The Free Press.

Perrow, Charles
1979 Complex Organizations: Critical Essay. Dallas: Scott Foresman and Company.

Peters, Edward
1955 Strategy and Tactics in Labor Negotiations. New York: Stratford Press, Inc.

Pondy, Louis R.
1967 "Organizational Conflict: Concepts and Models." Administrative Science Quarterly, 12:296-320.

"Varieties of Organizational Conflict." Administrative Science Quarterly, 14:499-505.

Porter, Lymen W., Edward E. Lawler and J. Richard Hackman
1975 Behavior in Organizations. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rothlesberger, F. J.
1959 Management and Morale. Cambridge: Harvard Press.

Ruben, Brent D.
1978 "Communication and Conflict: A System-Theoretic Perspective." Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64,2:202-210.

Selltiz, Claire and others
1959 Research Methods in Social Relations (revised). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Simon, Julian L.
1978 Basic Research Methods in Social Science: The Art of Empirical Investigation (2nd). New York: Random House.

Stepsis, Joan A.
1974 In J. W. Pfeifer and J. E. Jones, The 1974 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators. San Diego: University Associates.

Thomas, Kenneth
1976 "Conflict and Conflict Management." Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 889-935.

Van Doorn, J. A. A.
1966 In Anthony de Reuck and Julie Knight (ed.), Conflict in Society. London, England: J and A Churchill, Ltd.

Wolff, Kurt H. (trans.)
1955 Conflict and the Web of Group-Affiliations, by Georg Simmel. New York: The Free Press.

APPENDIX A

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript of Interview with Respondent #2

Hitherto the board has relied on their administrative staff to determine what courses should be employed and what resource materials.

QUESTION: Principals as well?

Yes, and I bring it to the Board. In this case the trustees take it upon themselves to ask me to withdraw them from the schools so they can have a second look at them. I withdrew them and of course we have a conflict here at this level. Their organization indicated that they are a course of studies. I have indicated to them that they are not a course of studies but a resource manual. So, I took them out and gave them to the trustees to read. Taking the manuals out of the schools and giving them to the trustees to read was effective in terms of the fact that then they were responsibe for reading the manuals and determining whether there was anything wrong with them from their own personal perspective which as you know is an arduous task in itself . . . besides they don't have the expertise to judge. Thereafter it arose again because there was a committee of concerned parents who challenged materials.

QUESTION: Were they formalized?

They are formalized (the interest group) and publish a column in the paper. So we had a situation where I was away on holiday. I had the agenda prepared for the regular board meeting and I saw no reason to change it just because I was going to be away. What I didn't realize at the time was that the chairman had been talking to this fellow and in my absence they had to have a guest speaker so they had cooperation regarding the topic. Now we have a very clean cut conflict at the senior level. Board and Director in short. I decided to approach it from an educational philosophical angle.

The teachers liked the manuals very much. They found the activities very useful. But in terms of the materials, who really give a damn whether that stuff's in the schools or not? So . . . it's not a big thing. Do you go to bat for a trivial issue? We don't go to bat for every other little thing like fire posters or the dairy producers. So maybe the Director makes his first mistake. He does go to bat for the materials because he feels the teachers are using them well. And, he loses! He loses at the board table. It culminates in two trustees who indicate they wish to exercise their stewardship and they move that the Director be authorized to return them to where they came from. It really was only two. I talked to some of the others privately and they indicated to me that they didn't

feel the manuals were . . . you know . . . overly humanistic or . . . against the espoused divisional ideals or philosophy. I think they were with me, so to speak . . . But here we have somebody who their allegiance to is far greater than it is to me. Because he is a clergyman speaking with a clout greater than mine. I'm speaking as a layman. Ok, what does one do? Well I have to indicate to the principals by memo that I have been authorized to withdraw the materials because the board doesn't feel it's appropriate. But, one must withhold a certain amount of information, the rationale . . . by not indicating the rationale one can put it off to political considerations. If you appear to indicate that your board is working from a narrow philosophical framework then what you are doing is reducing the credibility of the board and thereby reducing your credibility. Then there is the question of how do you approach the board. How far do you, as Director, go to prostitute your own thinking? Compromising an issue . . . politicizing the whole thing? Then there is the question of how factually do you report things that happened. Do you go around to each principal and tell them the board has been totally incorrect in its actions? No. But, the quicker you exercise the mandate, the quicker you can forget about it. So I've sent the memo and I've been getting one or two of these manuals but I know there are others around. I've asked them for them; I've legitimized it; I've put it in writing in a memo; I've told the principals' group; it's really up to the board now to go after me again to drag them in. I've been compliant up to a point. The actual issue itself is too small to get great organizational conflict from. It's a <u>power</u> thing. If some members go on a witch hunt I could be in trouble.

So, reviewing the situation then, the board of education had reviewed the manuals and I was advised they should be taken from the schools. It was to ascribe board rationale to something other. What I'm <u>really</u> doing is fulfilling the role of the Chief Executive Officer and identifying with the board and yet at the same time softening the approach of the board because that is the only rational thing to do.

QUESTION: Why did you choose to do it that way rather than telling it like it was? To preserve the board image perhaps?

No, ha, ha, ha. The board's image with the community and teachers was at an all time low.

QUESTION: I'm still wondering about the time, at the board table, when the issue was raised?

I dealt with it at the time, at the table, very poorly. I was frustrated . . . I was angry . . . they were operating from a very shallow emotional base. I also felt

hurt that they did not comply with the educational rationale. And I told them so.

QUESTION: At the meeting?

Yep! I indicated to them, that as far as I was concerned, they were operating from a narrow and shallow point of view. They didn't like it at all.

QUESTION: What was the reaction?

The reaction was an angry response to my presentation to not withdraw the manuals.

QUESTION: It was an <u>angry</u> response?

Oh, yes! No doubt! Pure power, and you don't argue with pure power at that point. You know . . . you back off. You take your licking and you learn something from it.

QUESTION: Did you learn anything?

Ha, ha. You bet! I learned that you don't argue when it comes to minor details . . . like resource materials!

QUESTION: Anything else you'd like to add?

I don't think so.

Transcript of Interview with Respondent #4

The problem is a principal if he ever was good turning out to be almost totally ineffective and a growing body of people knew this besides myself. I held several conferences to try to get him to improve his operation because there were pretty obvious kinds of small things, which in themselves weren't very important but in the overall picture were damned important. You know, like not getting to school on time, not filling in forms . . ."He was very inept at handling boards, very inept at handling board members." A new sub-division trustee was elected and he wouldn't put up with this kind of laziness . . . he was just horrified at this ineptness. I tried to get this guy four or five years ago and got no support. None to speak of at the local level or at the sub-division trustee level. I thought we had support but when we really went to do something about it in terms of moving to a single principal was the way I moved at that time, sort of under the table you might say, I got no support whatsoever. And so a differnt tactic had to be used.

I started to formulate a different strategy. I called both principals in and just let it all hang out and just said in effect "I'm through supporting either one of you. We are going to choose up sides now and if I can get you I'm going after you. You blow it again and I'm not going to, as Director, protect your ineffectiveness and inefficiency." And this was a bit of a shock to the guy. At one stage during the interview I called him one of the most ineffective administrators that I had ever encountered. And he said, "Well _____ that's the first time I've ever heard that." I said well you just don't go around saying that . . . I tried to tie you in in more kind ways along the way. I reminded him of some of these. I found that in that situation with the two principals that a trio is a pretty ineffective group. I mean they could gang up on me and I'd had it. So at this particular meeting I had my assistant in as a sort of a listener. He could ask questions or add to it. Or I'd ask, "Have I misrepresented the feelings of the board _____?" And that helped a great deal because I was no longer one on two but rather two on two. That didn't change anything mind you, it just set the ground work in no uncertain terms. No misunderstandings as to where I was coming from or the board was coming from.

So, he continued to do the kinds of things he was good at doing; not getting things done and so on. But during the course of this interview I sensed that I might have got a breakthrough in that if I really felt this way he might cooperate at some stage. I just sensed that. He didn't say anything in particular. But he continued to do it. So about two months later, a couple of things happened that upset me and we happened to be having an institute that particular day and I had some spare time and I got to

thinking about it and he had done a couple of other blatant wrongs in my judgment. So I just got a brainwave just like that (finger snap) and just thought I've had enough of this. I've set the groundwork and now I'm going to do it! I'd had the first meeting in September, the second one the first part of November. So about 10:30 in the moring I just went down and got him out of the main room. I asked him if he had some time. We went into a classroom and I said, "You know, we've had lots of hard times sir, but would you consider at all giving me your resignation because you're not only ruining yourself, you're ruining me and the board and the system . . . the whole works?" And he said, "Sure, if that's the way you feel about it. I think I could accommodateyou." I said, "As early as next week?", and he said, "As early as next week!" This was a Friday. I said, "Could I pick it up from you on Wednesday morning?" He said, "I think so." I think maybe I asked him for it on Tuesday because we had a board meeting but I made it no later than Wednesday in any case.

Now, the background I haven't explained on the rest of it is the community was upset, the board was upset. Every board meeting I went to there was another surprise about something that dumb so-and-so had done. And so constantly I was under pressure to . . . well did you know about such and such. I'd think we were having a beautiful meeting and then all of a sudden . . . did you know this was going on or that was going on. And so looking at it from the school standpoint, from the kids' standpoint, and my own standpoint, cause I was getting damned fed up with it, I went to the board on Tuesday and they bitched again! So I said, "Look you turkeys . . ." we were having another meeting on Thursday, ". . . I'll deliver a resignation to you on Thursday morning if I can have six months of silence about that school. I want the rest of the year to be happy." They just laughed and said, "You can't deliver that resignation . . . there have been people after it for 10 years, you can't do it." I said, "I'll deliver it if you will promise." They promised. Of course I knew I could get it. Went and got it Wednesday, delivered it Thursday morning and it's made the school, made the town. It's just been the best thing I've ever done as Director of Education.

QUESTION: Are you happy about it?

Yes. And so is he.

QUESTION: Is he still on staff?

We left him on staff. He's cooperative. Happier than he's ever been . . . he was out of his depth. And it took all of this time. He is really a fine guy though. A Christian sort of individual who is sort of hard to nail. But even he is happier.

QUESTION: What's the principal arrangement now?

Still the same. Still a dual principalship. I couldn't sell that. I couldn't get the whole loaf. We got a bright new guy for the school. It's a new ball game.

QUESTION: Were the two principals together on this in any way?

Yes, oh yes. There was a coalition against me. Partly because they were both more STF than the STF, if you know what I mean. I'd rather deal with the executives than I would with them.

QUESTION: What was it that motivated you to . . .the issue that went click . . . finally go to this guy and say that's it?

Oh . . . gosh . . . I can't really recall exactly what it was. It was something he had done . . . oh gosh . . . I remember that he had done something that upset me and I said the hell with it and did it.

QUESTION: I would be interested in knowing how you responded to some of these, you mentioned, late for school and not filling in forms and so on.

Kindly at first. I'd move over and say, "Now look, we just don't operate that way. We just can't." Or I'd phone him. Then occasionally it would get taken out of my hands because it was so blatant. He would do something so silly that it would come to the board's attention. Like he would take off without permission or something like this. Not that he was trying to be miserable, just that he was that inept. Then they would have me write him a letter and say . . . and so we used the whole gammit of techniques that you could find to chastize him to do the job.

QUESION: So you would write him letters too. Did you speak to him informally?

Yes, formally and informally. I would meet with both of them quite often because they were often both involved so I would call, oh, several meetings. Perhaps one a month almost I guess. Then I realized that this troika thing wasn't working. Like I was calling them and I was getting nowhere and I couldn't really understand why until I sat back and analyzed it. You know, a group of three is unworkable if two don't want it to work. And so, that's when I packed that in. But I was meeting with them frequently. That's when I called my assistant in to indicate to them that I had called my last meeting. "You guys want to talk to me, I'm available, but you're on your

own from now on. I've protected you, I've saved your hides, I've taken personal abuse because of it. It might even cost me my career but I'm ready for it. If it does, that's fine. But if I go, one or both of you are coming with me!"

QUESTION: What about the staff? How did they feel?

Pretty good about it really. There was some rumor. I had a couple of them come down to the office and wonder what was going on and that I was being very unprofessional or negative or something and I spent about an hour and a half with one of them. But, by the time I got finished pointing some things out to him . . . he was the same guy who quit the vice-principalship because of exactly the same things I was unhappy about. He just resigned one day just because of the ineptness.

QUESION: What about the community?

No bad reaction there at all. In fact I think the community just said, "Well for Pete's sake somebody's finally done something!"

QUESTION: What about five years ago when you tried?

No, I don't think the community was ever behind him but it's a big enough community that he got pockets of support. I couldn't go out socially without hearing about it. Ever! And I'd say I've got office hours, they start at nine o'clock Monday morning, and they'd say I'll be in. But they wouldn't come. They'd get a drink or two and . . . every time I'd go out socially I'd get it. And so would the trustees but they wouldn't collate. A group here and a group there. They couldn't get together on it. And neither would the local board. The local board would never have taken action. Those two guys had that local board pretty much where they wanted. But I knew I had sub-division support and as it turned out I got his resignation; we didn't have to fire him. We kept it . . . well I've talked about it more today than I have to anybody else . . . we kept it, you know, as his decision not ours. He got away with it beautifully and so did we.

QUESTION: Did you go to district board meetings?

I never missed one since the last year and a half since this really surfaced as a problem. I felt I had to get there because they were turning things around . . . even at those meetings . . . against the division office and against me and the sub-division trustee. I never missed one since.

QUESION: Now you don't go any more?

Oh, no. One of us is always there. We still have the other half of the problem.

QUESTION: Great stuff. Anything else you want to add?

No, I don't think so.

Thank you very much.

Transcript of Interview with Respondent #19

I guess this goes back to . . . is related to the situation I've had here. Where in this school division for six years, during that period of time some of my fairly close acquaintances were, of course, principals in this school division. At the time they were my acquaintances I was also a principal at the high school. That situation changed slightly when I came into this office as assistant director for a year and a half. And I think our relationship changed over that period of time, out of necessity to some extent. Then when I became director a year ago it was with that unusual mode of operation that we chose to use whereby _____ stayed for a year and became my assistant for a year. It tended to be a pretty good way of doing things in terms of continuity. At the same time it was no less evident in this case as in a case where I might parachute directly in that as soon as I became director I was going to be tried a little bit by the other administrators in the division. The other principals so to speak.

We had a principals' meeting about a year ago at this time. Our group is quite large . . . 14 or 15 people. We elect a chairman for the group and I simply report or talk about some issues of import. I guess it was after that meeting that I didn't feel all that comfortable because people disappeared in an uncommonly quick fashion. Usually they stayed around to talk and this time there were some little mutterings among people and nobody seemed to want to talk about anything very much and they were sort of heading off in all directions all at once. So the climate after the meeting seemed somewhat more closed than it normally had. I wasn't sure what this was all about but I was cleaning up a few things in my office with _____ and when I did leave, I was on foot, I passed one of our elementary schools just 10 or 15 minutes after the meeting had ended. One of our principals, who was from out of town, who was driving his car, was parked outside the school and they were obviously waiting for somebody. The principal from one of the elementary schools here and it looked as though they were kind of getting together for some reason. In fact, I had the feeling, after the atmosphere of the meeting, that something was up. So I spent a fairly uncomfortable evening. I wasn't just sure what was up but I was sure that there was something up. And, in fact, _____ and I talked about it that evening and the following morning. It was in the midst of our conversation that the phone rang. It was a call from one of the principals requesting that the principals of the major schools would like to meet with me right away . . . there were a few issues that they would like to talk about. At first the gentleman declined to mention what the topic was, but upon me asking outright . . . fine we can arrange a meeting, what is it that you would like to discuss? . . . he suggested to me, in fact, that it was

related to administrative and supervisory time which principals had. At that point I suggested I would be glad to meet with them and we finally set a meeting date for one week hence. This sort of brought my awareness level up. Something's up. I guess my conclusion was that the approach that was going to be taken was confrontation approach. A group pressure approach which we had not encountered in the past. In the previous two years _____ was a strong administrator and well known for what he might do if people put group pressure on him. It hadn't happened but it appeared that it was going to happen here . . . and it was a case of try out the new boy as well.

I saw it as a fairly critical situation. I thought if anything else, it was the one I needed to win . . . and the definition of win there might be pretty tough to come up with. But to win on the basis of some legitimate arguments and not on the basis of pulling rank. Pulling rank wasn't good enough at that point. I saw it as crucial in a number of ways. I thought that it was going to set the stage for my future as an administrator in this school division. I think in two ways: I think I had to demonstrate at that point, some knowledge, some ability, some expertise in confronting group pressure tactics in that kind of situation and to be able to show people I could handle it; and secondly, I think at that point I could use it as a reason to establish a set of parameters within which I believed we could work, the principals and myself together. In which they were going to be continued to be employed with us they were going to be prepared to work. I guess I felt pretty strongly about it. In short, I wasn't prepared to put up with that sort of pressure situation from my administrators for very long. I thought that during the last two or three years we had developed a real team approach in our administrative set-up. Well, I spent a fairly busy week. I identified a number of issues as I saw them and I prepared my own case. A pretty thorough preparation. I pretty well abandoned everything else I was doing for three or four days.

I saw four major issues. One was preparation time for principals in our system as compared to those in other systems throughout the province, and so I went looking for that information. I got printouts for every school in the province; administrative time, whether or not they have a vice-principal, and enrollments. I went through and summarized it, averaged it and looked at the percentage of administrative time that principals in other schools have. Our principals' time was in excess of the provincial average and I was sure it would be . . . otherwise I wouldn't have gone after it in the first place. Secondly, I suppose I saw the method of ascertaining administrative time. I had felt that it should be done on the basis of need. A situation where I sat down with the administration of a school and said, "Look, what do we need?" And while we have two schools in the division which are very similar in size,

within seven or eight students, 13 teachers each, I don't see them as having the same needs in terms of administrative time. As it turns out, it's pretty close, but I think the needs are very different. And needs change from time to time. I saw that as an issue versus what they seemed to want and that was a formula approach. And so I also got information about the formula approach. I went to the regional office. I went to the SSTA. We looked at the old formula that had been set down by the department. That was another issue I identified. The third issue was how principals used their time, particularly as it related to the supervision of teachers. That had been a recent addition to the responsibilities of our principals. We were expecting our principals to carry out a major role in supervision, and they saw it as something that was time consuming. The fourth thing I looked at was the best way, in my opinion, to resolve issues like that. That is, were we going to resolve issues such as this one on an individual basis or whether we were going to do it as a group? And I guess I focused on the probability that the only way it could be effectively resolved as a group was if there was a great deal of commonality with an issue among the schools. Quite frankly I didn't see the extent of commonality in this case. I wanted to be absolutely sure that I had control of the information; that I had more information on each of these issues than any of my principals. That was important to me. I felt that was the way in which I would be able to direct the meeting in the direction I wanted it to go. I focused on one further sub-issue and that was the one of the supervisory aspect. I guess I prepared myself to show the group how much time was actually being used in the supervising of teaching. Because I thought that one of the underlying things I was going to be hearing was that this has been dumped on us and look how much time it's taking. I didn't prepare a chart or overheads as I had done with some of the other information related to the average preparation time and so on. I wanted my reply in this area to be spontaneous as if the issue was a surprise to me. In fact I looked at the two schools that I had which seemed to be creating the major issue.

(At this point in the interview, the Director went into a detailed explanation of how supervision time was determined in each school in the jurisdiction. He also explained the provincial statistics and how he extrapolated them to apply to his division.)

I also intended when the issue came up, if it came up, by showing them the kind of enrollment decline they had been experiencing in their schools and indicating that in fact along with that enrollment decline there had not been a concurrent decline in administrative time. That in order to continue to justify, at the board level, the amount of administrative time one had, it was necessary to do a better

job of the supervision with the increased responsibility. So I saw that as a side issue that might become important and I was prepared to deal with that at some length. When the meeting itself came I wanted to be in complete control of the agenda, so I convinced myself that a number of things were going to happen. One of them was that we were going to deal with a number of frivolous little issues first, that had nothing to do with this. Housekeeping things. I had the secretary-treasurer come in. I encouraged him to find some little thing that he wanted to talk to the principals about and that took the heat off me because I was able to say, "Well _____ would like to talk to you about this." I dealt with another one myself, but they were really moot issues. And so we started with those. I wanted sort of complete control of the agenda and then at that point I simply brought up the major reason for the meeting being held and I asked the spokesman where he wanted to begin, what they saw as an issue and what they wanted to discuss. Incidentally, the principal of one of the high schools, who is full time administrator, bowed out of the meeting.

QUESTION: Did he tell you that he didn't want to be involved?

He was probably a source of information to me during the week. He probably was able to shed some insights as to the nature of the meeting coming up. Well at that point this fellow stated their case. They perceived that they needed more administrative time than they were getting . . . they thought that perhaps other people in other schools, from what they had heard, were getting more. Their responsibilities seemed to be growing particularly in the area of clinical supervision. He just mentioned that this was the perception and that they had met initially, briefly to discuss that and if I wanted to make any comment on that. So I made an opening I was told later by my assistant who sat in the meeting with me, took just over 40 minutes. Something related to overkill.

QUESTION: Were both your assistants there?

Just _____, . . . _____ and I thought it better if he weren't involved in this one. It was related to the power struggle so to speak and he had no desire to interfere. As a matter of fact, _____ did not attend board meetings or principals' meetings in the year that he was my assistant at his request. He said that he had better things to do.

QUESTION: He wasn't at the first meeting?

No. Well, in any case, it was like opening a flood gate. I talked about a number of things and in talking to my assistant later, she believed that what I did was

emotional. I tried to tell her that I intended it to be emotional . . . that I was acting. She said that nobody acted that well and that I actually was emotional which is possible. I started out by telling them quite frankly how much I appreciated the opportunity for an open and frank discussion like this and that it was really important to me. I talked about how the role of the principal had changed in the last two or three years in our school division. And I think more than anything since I came into the office, _____ and I did a few things together. That first year for instance we started a principals' retreat that we have each year at the end of the first week of school. Take our principals out of the schools and to a cabin at the lake and we do some in-depth in-service for a day and a half and then we have a day and a half of golf, fishing, drinking and bridge. It's been a real good thing. We have got to know each other well. I suggested to them that I had seen the role changing over the last few years and that instead of being the director telling people what to do, that we had really used a team approach and that I saw us as a team and I was sure that they did as well. By this time there were some downcast eyes and some head nodding and a lot of people looking uncomfortable. I told them how much I wanted that kind of open relationship to continue and that if in fact more information came up that I thought they should have I was most eager to go to them in an open way and tell them about it. That I didn't keep things from them. I didn't skulk around behind their backs . . . that's the way we could talk frankly with each other when the need arose for this sort of thing and they agreed. I also told them that from time to time in fact that there might be some advantage in them having some of their thoughts gel without my input because I tend to talk a lot. And if they wanted to have an occasional meeting where I was not directly involved that was fine with me. They were free to use the board room and there was mileage available to come in to such a meeting, which has happened. Well, anyway . . . after that I continued on to the issue at hand . . . I talked about principals allowances and that principals got paid extra . . . more than the average teacher and with that there had to be some added responsibility involved in that payment. I also talked about the general decline in the number of students and teachers in the division. That there must be some rather apecific reasons to escalate or perhaps even to maintain the amount of administrative time that they had. In fact I mentioned the maintain first in that in fact on the surface it would appear that on the average we were slightly in excess of the average and with the enrollment decline we had experienced without the concomitant decline in the administrative time we would have to do some serious thinking to justify to the board to keep the level where it was. I also suggested that while we could trade some ideas and have some discussion, the decision would be made on the

basis of each individual achool and its administration . . . the needs of that school and the type of activity the principals carried out. I think that was important too because at the time some of them were not supervising the way they should have been. I also suggested to them that there was a formula approach we could look at. I had a number of formula for them and that since the first initial call I had had a chance to get some information together. Would they like to see it? In fact they did. So at that point we trotted out the information . . . I had summarized it for them.

(At this point in the interview, the Director explained the chart he had prepared for the meeting.)

At that point, a principal suggested that perhaps we should go back and have a look at the way principals were using their time, because he was having difficulty getting things done in the time available. Maybe by looking at more effective ways of doing some of the things he was doing, or finding out how other principals handled it, it would be easier for him and so at that point I asked the rest of them if they were in a similar situation. That in fact we should take some time at principals' meetings to look at principal's roles, and the job one does within that and how they do that most effectively and there was agreement on that and that's where we left it. In fact the issue of having more time has never come up again as a group issue. It has never surfaced again. And I don't think it ever really was an issue, but it was almost information overkill.

QUESTION: So the nature of the meeting was dual; real concern as well as testing the waters with the new Director?

Yes, I believe that was the case. There was a conscious attempt on the part of some of them to see if there wasn't a possibility that now that there was somebody a little greener in the office that they couldn't perhaps be pretty directive in terms of having them decide what was going to happen. Either they do it (a) cooperatively or (b) if necessary to have me making the decision.

QUESTION: Testing the transition from colleague to superior?

I believe that is the case. Probably less than they would have tested it had I moved directly from the principalship because I had been in the office for one and a half years and had worked with some of them on that basis. But still, at the present time they know where the decision-making authority lies in this school division office. They know that . . . well my assistant is somewhat aghast when one of my principals says I better ask _____ about this or

sort of I want to hear this right from the horse's mouth. When I was assistant they perceived me as not having the final say as far as the board was concerned. I think they were still testing the waters on that one. If they could establish the kind of relationship such that if they brought pressure to bear they got what they wanted.

QUESTION: A crucial situation which would determine your leadership and decision-making style in future?

Correct. Very correct.

QUESTION: What was their response to some of the things that you said at the meeting? Were there any counter arguments or did you just come in and bash them with all this information?

They were ill prepared. It was kind of information overkill on my part. I didn't want to harangue them but my case was based on facts and philosophy. I have usually been able to buy some time by hearing some of the scuttlebutt in advance and preparing for it.

QUESTION: Did you present all the information to the principals?

No. Some of it didn't enhance my argument. I suppose rather than to suggest that . . . well, I was somewhat selective of information that's all. I suppose had I gone through these things and found out that they did just the opposite I wouldn't have used them at all. Certainly an information bias. I created the percentages. I certainly chose the information I was going to use very carefully. Of course I didn't talk about multigrade classrooms, increased responsibility and so on.

QUESTION: Well I think that's just a great story. Anything else?

No, that should be it.

Transcript of Interview with Respondent #22

The story is about a kindergarten at the time and she was not the world's greatest kindergarten teacher let's establish that right off the bat. She was a pretty weak sister when it came to kindergarten. She didn't have much of that mothering instinct that's required. She never hugged a kid, for example. And that was the source of her biggest problem. She also had an extraordinarily bad P.R. problem. She had a very difficult time relating to parents and talking to people.

Schools hadn't been open a week yet in my first year in this job and I had a delegation of about 15 mothers show up here at the office. They informed me that they didn't like this teacher and they would appreciate it if I got going and got rid of her. Like not now, but right now. Yesterday would be great. So like anyone would do in the circumstances I said, "Look, I've only met the gal once, and you have to give me some time to establish what the situation in the classroom really is." I also told them that my first instinct would be to not dismiss her but to try and improve her teaching. They were actually quite good and they accepted that. I did supervise this particular teacher and worked with her and with her principal. I could see what the sources of her problems were. I also knew I had no grounds for dismissal. The STF would have my butt if I tried to move her out of there. In my discussions with my board I outlined the problem to them and indicated that next year I would probably move her out of the kindergarten. I could salvage her as a teacher. And that in fact was the eventual outcome. She's teaching grade three right now and doing a reasonably good job.

Well, ok. From there a group of concerned local citizens, let's call them charitably, decided that I wasn't moving fast enough and they got after the local board.

QUESTION: When was this?

Oh, this was in October.

QUESTION: So they gave you two months?

Not even that! A little more than a month and they got after the local board and they had a delegation into the local board screaming and yelling that this teacher had to go.

QUESTION: Was that the same group that saw you initially?

No. Different group; interconnected but different. In fact, most of the hollering that was done subsequently was done not by parents of kids in her classroom, but by other people who felt they had axes to grind.

QUESTION: So there were two distinct groups. One to you and one to the local board?

At this stage yah. Subsequent to that another delegation came back to the board of education. This time with a couple of parents, and this one was mostly male. The original group that came to see me was mostly mothers. This was a much angrier group.

QUESTION: This was the third group now.

Well yah. But remember they were all interconnected with shifting memberships. This group started to really holler and had zeroed in on a spokesman by the name of _____. He was . . . he decided that this was a really crucial issue and that everything was rotten in the state of Denmark and by golly it was time that somebody did something about the whole rotten school system. He chose to focus his anger, his personal anger against the school system, at me as a person, as an individual. That led to the more or less public meeting ~~of the~~ local board in December. I was at home during the evening and the principal of the high school phoned and said, "I think you better come down." I arrived just in time to hear a motion being moved and seconded that the Director of Education be fired on the grounds of incompetence because he couldn't recognize an incompetent teacher when one was obviously staring him right in the face. I smiled at them and said, "Thank you very much." The board adjourned the meeting and went into camera. They refused to forward the motion to the board of education. The vote was 3-1-1. One guy wasn't too sure whether he liked me or not either.

Actually, the issue over the particular teacher died down quite a bit. Although, we did wind up having a parents' meeting. The board of education and I and the principal called the meeting and let anybody shoot off steam. The teacher was there and we laid 'er all out on the table and that virtually put an end to it. By this time I had made it fairly publicly known that the teacher would not be teaching the same grade next year. Things started to quiet down with just about everybody except this _____ fellow. He went on a crusade that lasted two years. He did everything possible to make life miserable for teachers, administrators, for me and the board.

He ran for the board of education, in what turned out to be a . . . here, I'll show you his campaign poster. I've got it right here. I take it out every once in a while when I think things are tough and remind myself that, hey, this is peaches and cream compared to my first year. He went after us on virtually <u>anything</u> you can think of. He made an issue out of <u>everything</u>. I'm trying to think of some of the more personal things. One was, I negotiated with the board to lease me a car. That was obviously

extravagant. Another was that the board, round about the time I got here even before, started talking about plans to renovate the office. We're still sitting here, two and a half years later, largely because of the vitriolic opposition we haven't done anything. The board recognizes that our facilities here are shameful at best, you know, but they haven't done anything. A large part of it has to do with the opposition this guy managed to stir up.

QUESTION: How did you counteract that kind of stuff?

I'm not sure whether I could say I avoided it or withdrew from it or what. I think it was more a matter of accepting him for what he was and then diligently trying to prove to people that he was poisoning . . . hey t'aint so, you know. Also, by doing things that were obviously inconsistent with the garbage that he was spreading about me. I was counteracting with information. Like, I worked very hard here with the local board. With the school staff.

It happened that the school staff was causing me a little bit of trouble. His mother-in-law is one of my teachers. She was acting as an information pipeline to him until I stomped all over her, you know, and closed that door for him.

QUESTION: How did you do that? Did you just confront her?

No! I didn't because it was a little risky proving that it was her and only her. So I called a staff meeting and told them <u>that's it</u>! <u>No more</u>! That seemed to work reasonably well.

QUESTION: One meeting?

Yes. But there are still some people that think that I acted in a rather heavy-handed and overbearing fashion. But my nerves were getting a little frazzled and so were the board's.

But, there were a couple of other instances which came up. This guy's wife was the president of an institution known as the Sheepdip College of Music. They gave organ and piano lessons as well as singing and dancing lessons. They occupied a classroom in the high school. I decided we needed the space, and we did. So I went to Mrs. _____, as president, and said, "I'd like you to be thinking about alternate facilities. We are coming to the situation where we need more space in this school and I'm sure we can work out something." The two are very well matched. They leap to conclusions and they don't really listen to what you are saying. And I bloody well told her so, too, in no uncertain terms! So anyway she went screaming off to my board chairman and told him I had given them 48 hours to get out. I was thinking of next September. There was a

petition went around town that had some 400 signatures that they be allowed to stay in the school that year. Well, they were out.

QUESTION: As of September?

Oh heck, they were out before that. The board got angry at this response and this silliness, and they just said get them the hell out of there. We just happened to have an old space over there and the board said they can have that space.

QUESION: What did you do to encourage the board to move them out?

I didn't have to do a thing. I just reported to them what was going on. My trustee from here was fully cognizant of this petition. There were people going from door to door. Even knocked on my door. I signed it ha ha. But the board got really upset. They got very very supportive. Like muskox in a circle with me inside! It helped a lot. But, anyway, let's get back to _____, because he's the one that interests me. He ran for the board of education in a very vitriolic campaign. He lost that election but ran for the local board of trustees and was successful there, but it was a very close vote. He was fifth on a five-man board. There was a lot of interest. There were 13 candidates running.

QUESTION: How many votes cast?

About 600.

QUESTION: Really! Isn't that a lot for this size community?

Oh, yes. But there had been quite a bit of interest generated with all this fu-fer-all. Three of the candidates, the top three, were very supportive of me and the board. There was a gal who was supported by this _____ fellow and she came fourth and he came fifth. She has subsequently turned into an excellent trustee. Once she got to know me and the schools a little better she's become very very supportive. _____ became very isolated. That's probably the story of my conflict resolution was that I was able to isolate the guy by working on his cohort and showing her what was going on and involving her. I succeeded in isolating _____ totally on the board. In fact got the local board to beat some sense into the man. Verbally of course, they literally beat some sense into him.

QUESTION: Can you tell me how <u>that</u> all took place?

Well ah . . . yah, I guess so. Have you met _____? Well, she has a daughter . . . very . . . well, EMH. And the kid is over at the school here and is sometimes the butt of teasing by other kids. An incident happened at the school one day where some older boys decided they wanted to have the little girl take her pants off and show them her private parts and all this kind of thing. Well, _____ got a hold of this incident and went storming like a bull all over town, stirring up trouble and thoroughly embarrassed the child's mother, and the school, and everybody else. And there happened to be board meeting a few days later and the other four members of the board got _____ in the middle and just dumped on him . . . exceeding his authority by acting on behalf of the board without prior approval of the board; and his anti-school attitude; anti-administration attitude and they really let him have it. He went to one other board meeting for the rest of his term after that meeting and did not seek re-election.

QUESTION: How old was the little girl?

Grade three age. Yah, bad news. Yah, he's crazy. You know, he really is a strange bird.

QUESTION: And he couldn't see how this would be an embarrassment to anyone?

And he was frequently in and out of the schools seeing what kind of trouble he could raise. And he has one son who is, you know, a regular little monster in school. But Dad can't see it. Everybody else's kids are rotten except his. Teachers are all bad. There's no doubt about it.

QUESTION: Did you have to do any informal persuasion for these trustees to dump on him?

I went and talked to the local board chairman and explained my perspective on what was happening. He didn't have to do too much reading between the lines to get the message as to what I was suggesting that he do. I trotted out the trustee code of ethics and laid it on the chairman of the local board and then sat back and let it take its course. Because by that time I had already won over that fourth trustee. The lady that had originally come in there like she was going to clean up the rotten house. By that time she was already on our side and thoroughly sick of the guy she had worked so hard with before. So I didn't have to <u>really</u> spell it out. I just reviewed the circumstances and <u>let</u> them do their thing themselves. And they did it very very well.

QUESTION: So he, as far as you are concerned, is out of the educational picture?

I haven't seen the guy for six months. But he made the first two years of my job here very interesting. And I don't suppose I'll ever undo all the damage that this guy did. But you know, I'm isolated here. I'm not part of any service club or anything. I'm not going to force myself on anybody. I'm sure a lot of it goes back to _____ because he spread so much dirt around town about me. It's bound to have its effect. Bound to make people a bit reserved about me. When this whole thing was going on, I wrote a lot of aritcles for the local rag. I write a fairly regular column anyway. That, keeping people informed, helped. I send out a regular memo. It's primarily addressed to teachers but I also send it to <u>all</u> trustees. Local boards as well as my board of education.

So, for a lot of people, it's water under the bridge, but I'm still out of the mainstream. My kids really like it here.

So, have I covered the ground for you?

Yes, thank you.

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE

Department of Educational
Administration
Education Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
December 20, 1980

Dear

I am presently engaged in conducting a research project to fulfill requirements for my Ph. D. degree in Educational Administration from the University of Alberta. I have randomly selected thirty Saskatchewan Directors of Education and Superintendents of Education to supply me with data. Your name was drawn as part of the sample.

Because of the nature of my research, I must have an indication of your willingness to participate. Therefore, I would ask you to read the underlying brief description of the project and decide whether or not you would consent to be one of my respondents. I will be contacting you in the next two weeks or so by telephone to get your reply, answer any questions you may have and establish an interview time.

The study is designed to investigate tactics used by administrators when they find themselves in a conflict situation. How the administrators behave to achieve closure of the conflict will be the main thrust of the investigation.

The critical incident research technique will be employed to obtain the information. Simply stated, in-depth interviews will be conducted where the respondent will be asked to describe in detail facts leading up to a conflict episode, the episode itself and the consequences of action he took while engaged in the conflict. Thus, I will have a series of unique critical incidents from which I will be able to draw conclusions.

I wish to record the interviews electronically for the purpose of analysis of the data. However, if you seriously object to the presence of a tape recorder, or feel that recording the interview would limit or stifle your responses, I will not use a recorder.

Should you agree to participate, your anonymity is absolutely assured. Names, dates and places will not appear in the text of the thesis.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation. I

look forward to speaking to you by telephone in the next couple of weeks. I also anticipate renewing some friendships when I begin my interview schedule.

Yours sincerely,

R. D. Loewen

30th January, 1981.

Dear

Just a short note to thank all of you for participating in the collection of the data for my thesis. My interview schedule, despite some unforseen delays, has been completed.

I was most pleased and delighted with the candour you afforded me during the interviews. As a matter of fact, some of the discussions were so frank and open that I will be unable to completely explore all implications because of the sensitivity of the data.

However, be assured that in reporting the results I will not identify anybody or any place. Information which might be an embarassment to any individual won't be used or will be disguised.

After the completion of my dissertation I will send each respondent a summary of my findings.

Once again, I sincerely thank you for sharing your experience with me, your candidness and your time.

Yours sincerely,

R.D. Loewen.

RDL/vv.

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Mr. Peter Dyck,
Executive Director of Regional Services,
Saskatchewan Dept. Of Education,
2220 College Avenue,
Regina,
Saskatchewan, S4P 3U7.

30th January, 1981.

Dear Peter,

As you are aware, I am studying at the University of Alberta toward a doctoral degree in Educational Administration.

I am presently working on my dissertation which is concerned with tactics employed by Saskatchewan Directors and Superintendents of Education when they are involved in conflict situations. My sample for the study is thirty randomly selected members of the aforementioned group.

In order that I might compare the demographics of my sample to the entire population, I need to know the mean age, years of training, years of experience as an educator, years of experience as an administrator and the years of experience as a director or superintendent for the entire group of directors and superintendents.

Therefore, I would appreciate any effort you or your office could make to supply me with that information.

If your office is unable to send the appropriate data, would you please advise me and possibly suggest where the information might be obtained.

Thank you and personal regards.

Yours Sincerely,

R.D. Loewen.

RDL/vv.

7-104, EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA T6G 2G5 TELEPHONE (403) 432-5241

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan
Education

Regional Services Division

2220 College Avenue
Regina, Canada
S4P 3V7

177

February 16, 1981.

Mr. R. D. Loewen,
Department of Educational Administration,
Faculty of Education,
The University of Alberta,
7-104, Education North,
EDMONTON, Alberta.
T6G 2G5

Dear Mr. Loewen:

In response to your request dated January 30, 1981, we quickly examined our files. I have discovered that it will be rather difficult for me to collect most of this information for you. We do not collect information on ages of directors, although I suppose this could be deduced in each case from their certificate number. Our files also do not differentiate between years of experience as an educator and years of experience as an administrator. This information probably would be available from the Teachers' Superannuation Commission for all directors in Saskatchewan. I would recommend that you contact Mr. Wally Sawchuk in this regard. I am uncertain at this point what their policy is in releasing information of this nature, however. Alternately, you might send a brief questionnaire to each of the directors/superintendents in Saskatchewan. We could provide a set of mailing labels for you.

I trust this is of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Peter W. Dyck,
Executive Director.

PWD/sb